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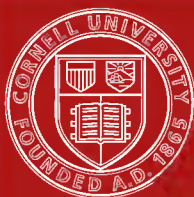
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A SAINT  
OF THE  
SOUTHERN CHURCH

MEMOIR OF THE RIGHT REVEREND  
NICHOLAS HAMNER COBBS  
DOCTOR OF DIVINITY, FIRST BISHOP OF THE DIOCESE OF ALABAMA

WITH NOTICES OF SOME OF HIS CONTEMPORARIES

A CONTRIBUTION  
TO THE RELIGIOUS HISTORY OF THE SOUTHERN STATES

BY THE REVEREND  
GREENOUGH WHITE A.M. B.D.

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OF ENGLISH LITERATURE," ETC.

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TO  
THE BISHOPS  
OF THE CHURCH IN THE SOUTH  
THIS PORTRAIT  
OF ONE OF THEIR SAINTLY PREDECESSORS  
IS RESPECTFULLY PRESENTED



## PREFACE

THE writer's cue may be found in the following passage from Bishop R. H. Wilmer's first address to his convention, in the year 1863 :

'I cannot but express the regret that no one of Bishop Cobbs' most intimate friends has yet announced the preparation of his memoirs. It would be sad indeed to think that the record of such a life should be lost to the church.

'I have no fear that those who knew him personally will ever forget him while memory lasts ; but we would fain see a faithful portraiture of the first bishop of the diocese handed down to future generations, that our children might know and love him for his virtues and his works' sake.'

A whole generation has passed, and the want yet remains unsupplied. It demands fulfilment, for the preservation of a beautiful memory now fast fading away, for the sake of the diocese of which he was the first bishop, of the university that he helped to found ; it is necessary to amplify and perfect the picture of church life and conditions throughout this whole region and therefore in the country at large in the period between the War of 1812 and the civil war. Hence it comes about that the task is at last essayed by a stranger of another generation. The immediate occasion of writing is the general satisfaction, highly gratifying to

the lecturer, that greeted a lecture upon the life of Bishop Cobbs delivered before the senior class in the Theological Department of the University of the South, and attended by many visitors, in the month of June, 1896. It was designed as an example of ecclesiastical biography, and from different quarters came requests for its publication. It seems peculiarly appropriate that the memoir should fall to the lot of the professor of church history in the institution that the bishop aided in founding,—that it should appear as a pious tribute to a parent's merit. Certainly the collection, preservation, publication of church-historical data concerning this region should be the particular province of that chair.

The writer cordially accepts as his aim that 'faithful portraiture' demanded by Bishop Wilmer. This can only be attained by placing the subject in his historical setting. No one of course can be understood out of relation to his times: it is remarkable how historic processes make a career and character luminous and in turn are illustrated by biography. This great, indeed infrangible principle is not seldom abused, and the abuse gives occasion to narrow and unreasonable views of the biographer's function; a professed 'Life' often turns out to be a history of the 'Times'—and accordingly it is argued that the 'Times' should be severely excluded. It shall be the present writer's study to subordinate the times to the man, and not to let the frame distract attention from the picture.

To carry out the figure, and let the reader know exactly what to expect: this will be a critical biography. There are those who would totally eliminate an author's personality in this department of literature: paint the portrait, they say, and let it speak for itself. But beside the silent fea-

tures one needs the commentary of the living voice. He would be a brilliant teacher who should station his pupil before a great picture and never say a word about it, vouchsafe no explanation, point out no merits or defects, never call attention to what would probably be overlooked. No: the function of the biographer is also critical, interpretive; it is the duty of one who by long study has thoroughly assimilated his subject to assist his readers to see it in all its bearings. In another sense this study will be critical, in that there shall be spread over it no false and sentimental glamor.

Among sources of general information may be cited Bishop Elliott's sermons with memoir by T. M. Hanckel, Bishop Lay's memorial sermon on Bishop Atkinson, Bishop Green's life of Bishop Otey, Bishop Polk's life by his son, and convention journals of southern dioceses; Jefferson's 'Notes on Virginia' and correspondence, Dr. Hawks' history of the church in Virginia, Dr. Henshaw's memoir of Bishop Moore, Bishop Meade's 'Old Churches and Ministers of Virginia,' certain articles in recent numbers of the 'Sewanee Review,' addresses by A. B. Meek, and J. W. Du Bose's life of Yancey. These last throw light on the literary and political situation in Alabama during Cobbs' episcopate. Particular information may be classified as follows:

I. Documentary:

A. Published or printed:

Bishop Lay's memorial article in the 'Church Review' for January, 1869,—the fullest sketch yet of Cobbs' life and character, but injured by a partisan tone in its very non-partisanship; memorial sermons by Bishop Elliott and Dr. George F. Cushman; Bishop Wilmer's 'Recent Past';

diocesan journals of Alabama with Cobbs' convention addresses; his apologetic tract, 'An Answer to some Popular Objections against the Protestant Episcopal Church,' printed in Tuscaloosa in 1849, and six of his sermons, some of which were widely circulated as tracts.

B. Manuscript:

The bishop's own journal, some of his letters—only too few—and letters from Rev. Everard Meade, Rev. F. W. Baker, Professor Schele De Vere and Mrs. M. H. Clark.

II. Oral:

From the bishop's descendants in Greensboro and Montgomery, from conversations with Bishop Wilmer at Spring Hill, Rev. W. A. Stickney at Faunsdale, Rev. Drs. J. M. Banister and W. M. Pettis, Mrs. C. E. Stickney and Mrs. Charles Richardson.

There are portraits of the bishop in his son's residence at Greensboro and in St. Luke's Oratory, Sewanee.

The writer would hereby render grateful acknowledgment to all who have assisted him in collecting material for the work, especially to the ladies to whose nice observation and retentive memories he is indebted for almost all those personal and domestic details that are indispensable to the lifelikeness of biographical portraiture.

UNIVERSITY OF THE SOUTH  
New Year's Day, 1897

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# I

## EARLY YEARS

THE provincial church of Virginia in the last stage of its history—that is, in the interval between the Seven Years' War and the Revolution—presents a melancholy picture. It may not be possible now to trace all the causes that led to its decay and duly to apportion the blame, but it is evident that that condition was the eclosion, the final full display and harvest of evils that had long been at work within it. The occasion of their sudden ripening was the distress incident to the Seven Years' War. In the year 1763 the impassioned eloquence of Patrick Henry set the clergy of Virginia in an odious light as the minions of a despotic master, only intent on exacting to the uttermost their tithes of mint, anise and cummin. The clergy were simply pressing their just claim; legal right was entirely on their side; but it was unfortunate that they chose that moment of depression to seek to enforce it. They were made to appear as rather anxious to extort their legal dues than to deserve them. Undoubtedly they were injuriously treated—but there can be nothing more humiliating, more subversive of spiritual interests than quarrels about money. Such unhappily were the staple of the church history of those days. We see on one hand a clergy whose dominant thought seemed to be to

secure their salaries, and on the other a laity whose ruling idea in ecclesiastical matters seems to have been to see how little they could be made to pay. The parsons were bitterly unpopular, and that unpopularity was reflected in perpetual, disastrous friction between the church and the civil authority. Governors and assemblies seemed to take malicious pleasure in humiliating the church in the person of its commissary and in baffling his well-meant attempts at discipline. The establishment was manifestly falling into ruin: both church and state were restive under the connection: both were opposed to the introduction of a bishop into the province, the church, strange to say, as well as the governor; though it was the one step that might raise it from its degradation, churchmen opposed it as 'inexpedient.' As a consequence of these disorders, missionary spirit was practically extinct; perhaps indeed that decay of zeal was their principal cause. In all the province Devereux Jarratt was the sole harbinger of the evangelic summer,—and he was disliked, suspected, ridiculed and almost persecuted by his latitudinarian brethren. The services were carelessly rendered, carelessly attended; the sermons were at best moral essays; sacramental life was at its lowest ebb. Sunday observance was lax: after public worship the people thought it not unseemly to go hunting. The parsons indulged in all kinds of worldly amusements, and not only were their manners irregular but they were also exceedingly ill educated. Here we touch a point concerning which more information is greatly to be desired. The College of William and Mary, designed as a training-school for a native clergy as well, had been in operation for two generations. In spite of the rapid advance of letters and science in that space of time, it would appear that its curriculum remained

unchanged. It had long ceased to offer an education suited to the times. Doubtless it too was seriously handicapped for want of funds, but it is not difficult to divine (for documentary proof would in the nature of the case be wanting) that the claims of education were being sacrificed to a supposed religious necessity, that the instruction was, in part at least, partisan and apologetic, that the school was being converted into a bulwark of the establishment. Certainly that would be sufficient to explain any lack of funds. Meanwhile dissenting bodies were rapidly spreading through the province; the Presbyterians were strong, the Baptists aggressive. These latter seem especially to have aroused animosity and to have been severely dealt with by the clergy and the authorities: hence they became the bitterest enemies of the church. And so the mental soil of old Virginia was being richly fertilized to bring to luxuriant growth the seeds of French infidelity already wafted thither.

In 1776 the blow fell. Dissenters and sceptics struck up an unholy alliance for the destruction of the establishment and, aided by the popular rancor against the clergy—a large majority of whom adhered to the crown,—found no difficulty in moulding the legislature to their will. The old idea of a comprehensive church—a church for all the people—gave way completely to a general religious equality and toleration of irreligion. Henceforth in the view of the civil power the church was simply one among a number of religious bodies of equal rights, and with this disestablishment one main source of its revenue was cut off: all rates ceased; no one was obliged any more to contribute to its support. Three years later the complete religious equality of all denominations and their purely voluntary support

were confirmed. One great source of the church's income still remained—that from her lands; but because this gave her an advantage over the unendowed sects the sale of those lands was already bruited: it was voted that they were public property.

The church emerged from the tempest of revolution with her houses of worship in disrepair, many of them desecrated and falling to ruin, her clergy reduced to less than one third of the number recorded only five years before, and that remnant impoverished even to destitution. The only hopeful feature of the situation was that after this drastic, Cromwellian purge, her remaining ministers were in sympathy with the new civil polity. The first incentive to action was the danger of losing the glebes: that she might continue to hold them her identity with the provincial church was asserted and she was incorporated in the year 1784, on application to the assembly, under the title 'Protestant Episcopal.' Mindful of former disputes and jealous of clerical control the laity were careful to keep the control of her property in their own hands.

Changes no less radical were in progress at the old College of William and Mary. The subordination of educational to ecclesiastical policy wrought its revenge, and now by the flail of revolution the ecclesiastical element was annihilated. Two chairs of divinity and one of Greek and Latin were suppressed and in their stead professorships of Law, Anatomy and Medicine, and Modern Languages were erected. Thus a college which had been practically a theological seminary was thoroughly secularized, and became a nursery of scepticism. It is noticeable that the classics shared in this depression. Such were the influences under which new institutions of learning—notably the state universities—

took their rise. 'Free inquiry' was the password of the day: 'Difference of opinion,' said Jefferson, 'is advantageous in religion'; he thought that uniformity therein, if it were attainable, was no more to be desired than identity of feature and stature. Madison enunciated definitively the principles upon which church and state are sundered in this country.

Unhappily the new-found liberty degenerated into license; moral dissolution is an inseparable attendant on war; after the Revolution infidelity and profligacy were widely prevalent.

Such was the day in which the subject of this memoir first saw the light. It was a critical moment for his state and country. Federal influence had been just strong enough to cause Virginia to unite with the other states and to elect Henry Lee as governor—but it was fast expiring. There had been a breach in Washington's cabinet, and Jefferson had retired to Monticello. There was war with the Indians and danger of war with England, who refused to relinquish the western forts. Algerine corsairs were preying on American commerce. To cap the climax, an insurrection broke out in western Pennsylvania in contempt of a late excise act: Washington had to call upon Lee to suppress it. The sensitive plant of public credit in the young nation shrivelled under the blast; it was the first of those financial crises and periods of depression that have marked with increasing frequency, severity and protraction the course of our history as a nation.

In those 'hard times,' on the fifth day of February, 1795, was born one who was to co-operate faithfully in the regenerative movements of the coming century. He was born in Bedford county and Russell parish, not far from

the new settlement of Lynchburg, and in view of the Peaks of Otter. 'One should be a better man' he used to say in after days 'who was born within sight of those peaks.' From them he drew in his fervent love of the hills. His father, John Cobbs, was an infidel of the Jeffersonian type: his mother on the contrary was a stanch churchwoman; thus the discords of the time were reflected in his own family. There is no evidence of other dissonance of opinion or sentiment between his parents, but that in religion was of itself sufficiently painful. Tradition runs that the Cobbses were of Welsh descent; 'cob' is said to be Welsh for 'harbor'; certain it is that the soul of this boy as it unfolded manifested characteristics markedly Welsh: a knowledge of his character may assist in solving the problem of the temperamental contributions of the multifarious constituents of our population. He was however yet more his mother's son—affording fresh illustration of the theory of oblique impress of the sexes: that is, that mothers of strong character transmit a formative influence to their sons, and fathers to their daughters. Mrs. Cobbs was a woman of decided character and exerted a determining influence on her son's destiny. She was resolved that he should be baptized into the church; there was no pastor, not even a missionary thereof in the whole county; she carried her infant son therefore on horseback full sixty miles to the nearest clergyman. Her family name was Hamner; to that she prefixed Nicholas (presumably for her father), and by that name her boy was baptized.

To summarize the points of character so far gained, we have certain Welsh traits derived from his father; a tender conscience and church principles, from his mother; appreciation of the beauties of landscape, to be derived from impressions of his earliest years; and if we bear in mind



the rudeness incident to young settlements, the lack of intellectual and æsthetic advantages, and recall that his birth fell in the last year of Henry Lee's governorship, whose Federal principles might seem to have passed into his blood, we have already all the necessary data for the construction and interpretation of his character, its excellences and deficiencies,—the latter entirely attributable, as far as we can see, to lack of early educational advantages.

To conclude concerning his immediate family: he was the eldest of a goodly number of brothers and sisters. Of the former, one became a physician, the other, a merchant, and rose to be mayor of Lynchburg.

With the closing years of the eighteenth century the depression of the Virginian church grew deeper. Though it now had a bishop, his efforts were powerless to stay the downward course of events that at last overcame his spirits also. The church buildings were getting more dilapidated, the clergy decreasing in number: old ministers dropped off and none came forward to take their place—and those that remained were becoming more secularized, owing to the hateful contest over property. In the year of Cobbs' birth no convention was held; it was galvanized into action the year after by the imminent danger of a loss of the glebes. In 1799 an act of assembly tolled the knell of the endowments: it repealed all legislation 'in which the existence of a governmental church was directly or indirectly recognized.' The church was now reduced to the passivity of despair, and in 1802 fell the last paralyzing blow: it was enacted that the glebes should be sold for the benefit of the poor. Thus the last external sign of her superiority to other religious bodies was obliterated, and the malice of her enemies was exhausted.

Outwardly the church seemed prostrated. The long,

disheartening struggle had told upon Bishop Madison's health and spirits; he practically confined himself henceforth to his duties as head of William and Mary College. It was rumored that he had turned sceptical—but it was only of the future of the church in Virginia. For a term of years no convention met. It is remarkable that other dioceses exhibited at the same time depression similar if not as grievous nor from the same cause. It seems as if the energies of the national church had been consumed in the task of organization. In the largest view it is apparent that the interests of religion in general were similarly depressed at the turn of the century, but as it progressed we discover steadily increasing signs of revival. The Roman Catholic communion, which during the provincial age had been only a Jesuit mission, had lately received proportionately large accessions from abroad in consequence of the troubles in France and Ireland; Pope Pius VII was encouraged accordingly to create an American province of his church, with archbishop and suffragans, in the year 1808. Baptists and Methodists meanwhile were competing in enthusiastic revival work: the success of the indefatigable veteran Asbury—he visited annually every state in the Union, sent out scores of evangelists, preached hundreds of sermons—makes one regret that Bishop Madison's statesmanlike plan of union was nipped in the bud: it seems as if at that date some concordat might have been concluded. Especially interesting are the secessions that then took place from the Presbyterian ranks, both on account of their bearing on the progress of religion in the southern states and because they resemble blind gropings after catholic truth. In Virginia Alexander Campbell was led by his study of the New Testament to a conviction that

Presbyterianism had fallen far from the Scripture model; he therefore discarded with vehemence the Westminster and all other confessions and advocated with originality and power a return to Holy Scripture and the apostolic age. Having discovered through his reading in the book of the Acts of the Apostles that baptism confers the gift of the Holy Ghost to the washing away of sin, he forthwith magnified that sacrament; and noting beside that Philip and the eunuch went down into the water, he concluded that immersion was the only mode, and united himself for a time with the Baptists. Furthermore, it came upon him like a revelation that the disciples met every Lord's day to break bread; he therefore revived the practice of weekly communion. His sect ultimately extended beyond the mountains and flourished in Kentucky and Tennessee. In the former state, which about the year 1804 was afflicted with veritable revivalist convulsions that recall like strange phenomena all along the pathway of religious history, what was at first simply a schism in a presbytery resulted, from the Calvinist point of view, in heresy. The religious excitement was so contagious that it taxed the machinery of the Presbyterian society to the uttermost to provide for it, and in the Cumberland presbytery several evangelists were irregularly sent out. When they were repudiated by the synod, that presbytery broke away from the body, and not only revived the ancient order of itinerants but shortly also developed Arminian views, asserting the universality of Christ's redemptive work, and that salvation and reprobation are conditioned by the human subject. This new sect likewise spread into Tennessee.

It is cheering to reflect that during those darkest days in the outward fortunes of the Episcopal church through-

out the land and in particular in the southern states, souls were being born into the world destined to be God's agents in her strengthening and extension in those states. In 1798 William Mercer Green was born in Wilmington, in 1799 Francis Huger Rutledge in Charleston. Early in the year 1800 there was born to a family named Otey—of some military and political distinction in Bedford county, in Cobbs' neighborhood and yet closer to the Peaks of Otter—a younger son who was named James Hervey, after a member of Wesley's club at Oxford, author of a once famous production—still popular evidently in that part of the world—entitled 'Meditations among the Tombs.' Contrary to the inference one would draw from such evangelical patronage, the Oteys were not associated with any religious body. In the spring of 1806 there was born at Raleigh to a Colonel William Polk, of Revolutionary and political note in North Carolina, a son who after the classic fashion of the time was called Leonidas. Colonel Polk illustrates, like Cobbs' and Otey's fathers, the prevalence of Jeffersonian scepticism: honor was his criterion, but he was not a religious man. In the summer of the same year Stephen Elliott was born in Beaufort, South Carolina,—a scion of a cultured family. We note also the birth, in 1804, of Thomas Frederick Davis at Wilmington, and in 1807 of Thomas Atkinson in Dinwiddie county, Virginia. Of the last some fuller account than Bishop Lay has furnished is much to be desired.

The history of the Virginian church and the educational interests connected with it are certainly deeply instructive to students of religious establishments in general and all who are interested in them and in the relations of religion and education. We see clearly that disestablishment and

disendowment are not identical or synchronous, for in Virginia a quarter of a century elapsed between them,—a space of time in which the church was offered a fair chance to retrieve herself and prove her spiritual as well as legal title to her lands. This she failed to do. The act of 1802 confiscating the glebes was without shadow of legal right: it meant revolution, spoliation, sacrilege. And yet, paradoxical as it may sound, it was the salvation of the church. Her enemies had at last done their worst: they had killed her body or, rather, stripped from it the soiled and tattered garments of earthly reliance; they could not touch her soul. The endowments had in truth spiritually ceased to realize the intention of their donors: they had become a snare, a sorry dependence, a source of anxious thought, of faithless worry, of spiritual corruption. It was necessary that the provincial church should die down to the root that thence the new church in the state should spring up and flourish. And so the last Erastian shred was snatched away; the long, sullyng strife between church and state, clergy and laity, finally ceased; the church, freed from false trust, false hopes and fears, was thrown upon her own interior resources,—upon God, her first and last resort. It is a fact that from that moment she began to mend; already she felt the ground-swell of the evangelical revival. Jarratt had just died, but he left devoted followers; and the ordination of William Meade in 1811 was an event of happiest augury. Elsewhere that year the consecration of Griswold and the conversions of Milnor and Ravenscroft marked the irresistible set of the evangelic current.

We should like well to know how the young Cobbs was passing his days in this interval; we can only infer that they were lapsing peacefully away. We should like to see

the kind-hearted lad in his home, among his younger brothers and sisters, or among his playmates at the rustic 'old field' school,—to know if he ever or often saw his little neighbor James Otey, and of any excursions he made to his beloved peaks,—but in this world such glimpses can nevermore be recovered. We know that his mother drilled him in the catechism and that an aunt on his father's side exerted great influence over him religiously. She was a zealous churchwoman, and in the absence of church ministrations abstained on principle from attending any conventicle of the heterodox. The young Cobbs' religious impressions were of this domestic kind; he grew up without once seeing and hearing a service of the church,—for none was rendered in his county. This personal touch is a striking illustration of the dearth of spiritual life, the absence of missionary activity in the diocese in Bishop Madison's time. What the lad's father thought or said about this home religious training we do not know; presumably he ignored it, and interested himself solely in his son's temporal education. He certainly gave him the best in that kind that the neighborhood afforded, sending him to an 'old field' school kept by a Scotch Presbyterian. There the training, if narrow, would appear to have been thorough: the foundations of an English education were firmly laid and the youth was drilled in Latin; it is said that ever after his pronounciation of that language betrayed his tuition by a Scottish burr. In 1812, being then seventeen years of age, he himself began to teach. So while Otey was a child and Polk and Elliott were infants, Cobbs' mind was already being exercised, in however humble a way, over questions of religion and education. Indeed, in the bosom of his family, in his own parents, he could see embodied opposing

views of their relation. Such an object-lesson is suited to make a young mind think, and to leave upon it indelible impressions.

We should like to see the youth in his novitiate of teaching,—to know whether he opened school with daily readings in the Bible and with the Lord's prayer. Taking a more discursive view, we should like to know what he thought of the great events transpiring in his time, rumor of which reached him in his quiet country home,—of the career and character of Bonaparte, for example, (we know how they excited Otey), and whether his ardent love and admiration of England were engendered in the course of that great contest, and if so, what he thought of the War of 1812. That year Bishop Madison died, and the young teacher must have marked with engrossing interest the progress of the long negotiations that resulted in the consecration of Richard Channing Moore of New York as his successor,—but of his thoughts on that occasion and of the growth of his mind and sentiments in general no known record remains.

The date of that consecration—1814—was as epoch-marking in the Virginian church as 1776 and 1802 were, and indeed more truly so, for the latter marked stages of decline and despondency, but 1814 an era of new life and hope. In after days the memories of those who had lived through it loved to travel back and dwell upon it fondly: it seemed to them 'a vernal season, a time of refreshing from the Lord.' Bishop Moore found active and devoted fellow-laborers in the diocese: the evangelic tide rose fast, to break in a great wave over the communion.

If we seek to discriminate the point of departure, the turning point of the movement, it will be found in opposi-

tion to the world. The previous latitudinarian age had been worldly; exclusion of all worldliness therefore was the motive of the new movers. They rejoiced in their freedom from entangling alliance with the state. The age was sceptical: they censured 'proud philosophy' and delighted to smite the sinful intellect with the inscrutable doctrine of the Atonement. The thirty-nine articles were rehabilitated: the ninth to the nineteenth awoke especial enthusiasm. The plenary inspiration of the Bible was asserted against the rationalistic criticism of the hour. The evangelicals lived in an ever-present sense of sin, death and the judgment; their conviction of the infinite significance of the immortal soul and its destiny induced a veritable Pentecost of missionary zeal; the church was baptized afresh with missionary spirit from on high. Preaching assumed fresh importance and in its style reflected the reaction; the moral disquisitions of the past were disparaged and replaced by fervent, pathetic appeals grounded on the corruption of human nature, its total inability to save itself, and sole reliance on the grace of God through Christ. Consciousness of reconciliation sought expression in bursts of sacred song. Socially the age, relaxed by scepticism, was characterized by self-indulgence, especially in liquors, by moral laxity and a plague of profanity—the infallible index of ill-regulated passions: at its best it was given to distracting gaiety, fashionable competition and worldly amusements; against these accordingly the evangelicals set their faces like flint, earnestly dissuaded from all 'worldly conformity,' denounced vulgar swearing and upheld an ideal of sobriety and purity. Against prevailing laxity they laid stress on a strict observance of the Lord's day.

An interesting phenomenon of the new era was an attempt



to adjust more happily the relations of religion and education. The restriction and distortion of education by ecclesiasticism, the exclusion of religion by an equally intolerant sciolism, had both proved untenable. In 1815 there came a proposition from the president of William and Mary's regarding a revival of theological instruction at that institution,—the re-establishment, that is, of professorships of divinity, like those that had been suppressed thirty-three years before. That suggestion was a note of the ensuing generation.

The same year Bishop Moore consecrated two churches, ordained three and admitted four candidates for holy orders, and confirmed one hundred and eighty souls. The year following the latter number was exceeded by nearly six hundred, and a society was formed for disseminating copies of the prayer-book. These were sadly needed: the young Cobbs had long wished to possess a prayer-book of his own and thought himself fortunate in getting one at last for a dollar and a half, and that a second-hand copy. He always thought that the backwardness of the church in his part of the diocese could be largely explained by this scarcity of books and costliness of the editions: a happy consequence, however, of the difficulty in getting a copy was that in his case it induced an extraordinary regard for it. It is to be noted, beside, that the evangelical movement proceeded at the outset along churchly lines and tended to increase regard for the public worship and sacraments of the church and to swell the attendance upon them.

The particular interest of the years through which we are now travelling in thought is their bearing upon our subject proper. They were the finally and peculiarly formative period in Cobbs' life. He was then twenty or

twenty-one years of age, his soul awake to the events transpiring around him and receptive of their influence; then it was that the mortal metal of his character was cast in the mould by which it was ever after known. Indeed, the years of man's life from twenty to twenty-four put in general the finishing touches to character, imbuing it with principles of which the whole after career is simply the application.

For several successive meetings the mind of the Virginian convention had been exercised over the matter of lay discipline and the standard of Christian living to be required of communicants. At last, in 1818, evangelical opinion was recorded as against the 'worldly conformity' winked at in the latitudinarian day. In its condemnation of popular amusements that opinion coincided interestingly, though doubtless unwittingly, with the proscription of the games, circus and theatre by the Christians of the primitive age. It was proposed to prohibit 'amusements involving cruelty to the brute creation'; dancing was seriously objected to; it was finally resolved that in view of difference of opinion concerning certain fashionable amusements and the need of some authoritative judgment in regard to them, 'the convention does hereby declare its opinion that gaming, attending on theatres, public balls, and horse-racing should be relinquished by all communicants of this church.'

In 1819 the convention approved an address prepared by one of its committees on the project of transporting negroes to the coast of Africa. 'The forebodings of the politician, the regrets of humanity, and the prayers of Christians,' said they, 'have long been turned upon the question of providing a remedy for the evils growing out of the slave population in this country.' They commended

with enthusiasm accordingly the aims of the Colonization Society 'to rescue this unhappy class of our fellow-creatures from the ignorance, vice and degradation to which the habits and sentiments if not the necessities of the present social state will forever doom them while they remain in this country; to restore a people whom God hath made of one blood with ourselves to their natural birthright of human beings; and . . . to deliver our land from a calamity which in its present progress is portentous of incalculable misery and disaster.' In conclusion they expressed the hope that as divine providence brings good out of evil so American slavery might be made to contribute to the evangelization of Africa. The convention ordered that the address be sent to the president of the Colonization Society.

A commanding interest of the epoch was that of Christian and especially clerical education. It appears that already, some years before the establishment of the General Seminary in New York, instruction in divinity was imparted by a professor in William and Mary College, in accordance with its president's recommendation before noted. The foundation of the General Seminary in 1820 furnished a powerful incentive to the organization of a similar school for southern candidates for orders—not, as was expressly stated, by way of opposition to the former but, we may add, by way of polarity; the ostensible motive was to provide a training-school for a native ministry. That was a sufficient motive; we need not look behind it; strict evangelical principles and a sentiment of diocesan independence had much to do with exciting interest in the project. In 1821 the Virginian convention, 'taking into consideration the deficient condition of the diocese as respects the means

of theological instruction, and the importance of retaining among ourselves, for education, those young men who may be disposed to devote themselves to the sacred office of the ministry,' for 'there are peculiar circumstances which render it necessary to cherish a seminary in the southern district,' recommended the establishment of a divinity school at Williamsburg, and communication with the standing committees of adjacent dioceses with regard to possible co-operation thence. As no notice was taken of the communication by the ecclesiastical authority in North Carolina, and as that of Maryland was opposed to the proposed location, for sufficient reasons, geographical, financial and educational, the seminary was established at Alexandria in the year 1823. Courses in Biblical literature and systematic divinity were opened ; others in ecclesiastical history and pastoral care were added later.

These advantages of study came too late to be of avail in Cobbs' case,—he was already finishing his preparation for ordination. His reading had been carried on under many disadvantages and discouragements : its prosecution is proof of a considerable degree of moral energy on his part as well as religious zeal. His only external incentive thereto came from his family, and in that only from its female members. Outside there were none to stimulate and cheer, no minister of the church within reach to look to for aid and counsel. In default of other opportunities for public worship he did not follow his aunt's religiously exclusive example but, whether for better or worse, sought such help as was offered in Presbyterian meetings. For a season, to use his own language, he 'quailed' under the powerful preaching of a Presbyterian divine of the neighborhood and was convinced of sin. It cannot be said that Cobbs was ever 'converted'

in the technical sense of the term; he went through no specific spiritual convulsion to which he could assign a date. He had indeed nothing in particular to be converted from, unless it were the teachings of a pious mother—and happily he was never convinced of the inefficacy of those. The term ‘vice’ is ludicrously incongruous with his sweet and simple nature: he had no vices to discard, no moral throes to suffer: from such his Christian nurture had effectually shielded him. That period therefore was one of gradually deepening religious consciousness, at the conclusion of which there was wrought into the fibre of his being a conviction of the inability of human nature to save itself. Thus the staple of his religious character was EVANGELICAL, and remained so to the end. That was the warp on which was woven the sacramental pattern of his life. Yet further, it would appear that for some time, under the spell of a one-sided preaching with its mischievous confusion of sin and guilt which was all that he had to hear, he was involved in toils of painful thought, was in as morbid a frame as was possible to his healthy nature, thought of himself as criminal, feared that he was reprobate. This mood also left its lingering mark upon his mind—a Montanistic prejudice against certain and those the highest aspects of beauty and many social pleasures in themselves innocent as exerting in some mysterious way a maleficent influence upon the soul. It was at or about the time of this crisis that he secured a copy of the prayer-book and by its aid ‘groped’ his way to sounder views of salvation than were promulgated from the Presbyterian pulpit. It is hard for us to realize with what consoling sweetness passages like these would strike upon an unfamiliar ear: ‘the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who desireth not the death of a sinner, but rather

that he should turn from his wickedness and live, . . . pardoneth and absolveth all those who truly repent. . . . God, who despisest not the sighing of a contrite heart, nor the desire of such as are sorrowful, . . . hatest nothing that thou hast made, and dost forgive the sins of all those who are penitent, . . . declarest thy almighty power chiefly in showing mercy and pity, . . . whose mercy is over all thy works, . . . who knowest our necessities before we ask, and our ignorance in asking, . . . whom truly to know is everlasting life.' They fell upon Cobbs' stricken soul with the force almost of an additional revelation, and inspired him with an undying affection for the book of common prayer.

His heart was now strongly inclined to the work of the holy ministry, and he began reading theology and church history. It must be remembered that his days were consumed in teaching others, so he had to devote his evenings to his private studies. As to material for these, it happened fortunately that there were dispersed about the neighborhood relics of old colonial libraries, probably supplied by the Society for the Promotion of Christian Knowledge. These his friends lent him, and he was thus enabled to read many standard treatises of divinity and polity. It would be interesting to know precisely what these were; we know that Hooker's Ecclesiastical Polity was among them and that he prized it highly; others, presumably, were Pearson on the Creed, Barrow on the Pope's Supremacy, Burnet on the Articles, Butler's Analogy, and the like. He worked by himself through a Hebrew grammar, so that at length he could add to his other avocations the reading of a chapter a day in the Hebrew Bible. Certainly his perseverance and devotion are a rebuke to the indolence of a highly favored generation.

His young contemporaries, destined to equally high place and heavy responsibility in the church, were all more favored in the matter of education than he,—were all graduates of institutions of higher learning, conspicuous among which was the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill. While Cobbs was making his painstaking, solitary progress, Green was studying at the university of his native state, where he was joined by Otey, a tall stripling with the look of an Indian. While yet in his sixteenth year Otey was six feet in height, and his figure and features, his piercing black eyes, sunburnt skin and straight black hair won him from his college-mates the nickname ‘Cherokee.’ He was an indefatigable student and performer on the violin. His remarkable attainments in literature and history secured for him at his graduation in 1820 the novel degree of ‘Bachelor of Letters,’ and an appointment as tutor in Greek and Latin in the university. In this capacity he may have instructed the young Davis, who had recently gone up from Wilmington to Chapel Hill. In 1821 Leonidas Polk was also entered there. One of Otey’s duties as an officer was to take his turn in holding prayers at the break of day; as we know, he had had no religious culture; the duty was therefore exceedingly distasteful to him, indeed quite intolerable, until a lady friend presented him with a prayer-book. This exactly answered his need; his mind was relieved; to that happy occurrence may be dated his first serious interest in religious matters and consequent attachment to the forms of the church. The same year he married and journeyed to Tennessee, purposing to open a school for boys, but was summoned back to North Carolina to succeed the Reverend George Washington Freeman in charge of a school at Warrenton. His college-mate Green had just

been ordered deacon by Bishop Moore, and was in charge of the parish in that place; there, by him, Otey was baptized.

Before we finally leave this period, we note the birth of Alexander Gregg at Society Hill, South Carolina, in the year 1819, and in 1823 that of Henry Champlin Lay at Richmond, Virginia. In the latter year Francis Rutledge, having finished his theological course in the seminary at New York, was ordered deacon by Bishop Bowen. In that year, moreover, Stephen Elliott was transferred from Harvard College to that of South Carolina, and young Polk entered the military academy at West Point.

In 1821, at the age of twenty-six, Cobbs committed the only apparently imprudent act of his life—yet even in this his judgment was not at fault. He took from his school, wherein she was a pupil, a cousin, Lucy Landonia Cobbs, who had not yet seen fifteen summers, to be his wife. It is reported that the marriage ceremony was delayed: that at the appointed time the bride was caught wading in the brook! She made him a fond and helpful wife; their married life was one of perfect concord only broken by his death after nearly forty years.

At the age of twenty-nine, having made all due preparation, he applied to Moore for ordination. The convention met that year in Staunton, Augusta county. Thither accordingly he journeyed on horseback, full of apprehension over the approaching ordeal, the examination and the service. He had only once before participated in public worship according to the usage of the church. On one and the same day he was confirmed, ordered deacon, and partook for the first time of the supper of the Lord. The place was Trinity Church, Staunton; that red-letter day in his history, the twenty-third of May, 1824.



## II

### PASTORATE

THE twenty years of Cobbs' ministry, almost entirely spent in his native state, were divided into two equal halves by his appointment as chaplain at the University of Virginia and removal thither in 1834. To an examination of the earlier half, the first ten years of his pastorate, we now address ourselves.

No other period in our history can have been as perfectly in accord with Cobbs' spirit as that in which he began his pastoral labors. It was the 'Era of Good Feeling,' perfectly expressive of his own sentiment, which ensued upon the adoption of the Missouri compromise, and was marked by the ascendancy of Henry Clay—an orator and statesman after Cobbs' own heart. It is perhaps actually the most interesting period in our annals, for it was the dayspring of American humanism, an era of reviving enthusiasm for the classics, of beginnings in literature and art.

On his way home from Staunton Cobbs stopped at the house of a married sister of his and there held his first service and preached his first sermon. Starting literally with nothing but God's grace, preaching and teaching in private dwellings or any convenient place, he recovered the few remaining church people scattered widely about the county,

won others soul by soul, organized congregations, interested them to the point of sacrifice, and had the happiness to see church-building begun in two foci of his extensive parish. On the broad and deep foundations thus laid in his year's diaconate he was henceforth securely to build. When in 1825 he drove with a friend from Lynchburg to Richmond and took his seat in convention as the first regular representative from Russell parish, he was able to report that in spite of its long dissolution, the late complete prostration of the church, prevalent ignorance of her services and prejudice against them, they were slowly gaining in esteem, responses were becoming more general, the newly gathered congregations were attentive, he had baptized twenty-three souls, and had promise of two neat brick churches. The revival of that parish, wrote William Meade in a later day, 'is to be ascribed under God to his zealous and for a long time almost gratuitous services, since his support was mainly derived from a school. Under his ministry St. Stephen's and Trinity churches were built and other positions occupied.' It is pleasant to record this tribute, for at their first meeting Meade was not favorably impressed by the young missionary. Some rusticity possibly, some awkwardness of manner, led him to remark to Cobbs' friend from Lynchburg: 'Another clog upon the church!' 'Wait and see,' was the reply. Never was man more deceived by a first hasty impression.

After the adjournment of the convention Cobbs was advanced to the priesthood by Bishop Moore in the Monumental Church, on Sunday, the twenty-second of May.

One naturally desires at this juncture a glimpse of the personality of the man and his outward aspect.

He was tall and spare, nearly if not quite six feet in

height, and pale of complexion. Face and figure told of years of studious application: all his life after he had to bear the burden imposed by those early days of teaching and nights of prolonged study: those sedentary pursuits made him a lifelong victim of dyspepsia. He was never strong, and was subject to attacks of ill-health. His circulation was sluggish: hence his lack of color and hence to him the luxury of heat. It is inspiring to mark the peaceful triumph of his spirit over the impediments of this physique. His native goodness irradiated with real beauty and sweetness of expression a countenance otherwise plain, —a serene brow, clear, mild, benevolent blue eyes slightly near-sighted, a mouth somewhat large, persuasive lips, and a chin in which firmness and gentleness joined. His character was a singular blend of simplicity and sagacity; he was amiable, unsuspecting, of sympathies so strong that they were constantly imposed on,—and yet possessed of almost unerring penetration into motive. He was absolutely unworldly, supremely indifferent to his own ease, claims to consideration and the like, while unfailingly thoughtful of others'. So he had the very substance of courtesy, without which that virtue is the veriest sham and indeed ceases to be—a kind heart. He was simple in his habits, rose early, dined at midday, had early supper, followed by family prayer, and went early to rest.

It must have been about this time that he was engaged in conducting the academy at New London in his native county, some miles from Lynchburg. Thence his income was almost entirely derived—as indicated by Meade in the extract quoted,—for many years he received practically nothing for his pastoral services: the people had not learned to give. Already we find in his history and that of the

diocese the singular contradiction implied in a demand for men and want of funds to support them. Of course a desire that has no effect is not a want but mere velleity; we know from economics that a want, a demand, implies something effectual, substantial—that one is willing to give something for what he wants and, if he has nothing, to work until he gets it. If he will neither give nor work it is sign enough that the missionary had better pitch his tent elsewhere. A piteous case drew from Bishop Moore the following affecting appeal to his convention: ‘In the plea which I now offer in behalf of the clergy I am not pleading for a support unreasonable and extravagant. I ask only for a sufficiency to enable them to live in comfort. I ask not for any of the luxuries of life. I am only soliciting for a provision which will enable their children to appear in the society in which they move, decently habited and properly instructed. Should the minds of any of the people of our charge be impressed with the idea that this is already the situation of the clergy embraced in the proposal, a journey through some of our parishes would convince them of their mistake. On a late tour through an extensive district of this diocese, I met with an instance of extreme penury in the case of a truly pious, well-educated and excellent clergyman belonging to our communion. Patient under his sufferings, humble as a little child, he poured no complaint whatever in my ears; but being told by a wealthy and humane neighbor of his wants I was surprised at the fortitude he manifested and the silence he had observed.’

Five days in the week Cobbs labored for his livelihood and that of his growing family, and devoted the other two—his Saturday holiday and Sunday—to pastoral and priestly offices.

In his relations to the sectarians with whom the county abounded, many of whom offered bitter opposition to the church, Cobbs was pacific. He kept the even tenor of his way, preferring to dwell upon points of union, refusing to be drawn into controversy while ever ready for discussion with a sincere inquirer. By this course he assuaged the hostile feelings of many and attached not a few. Of all denominations his sympathies went out in most limited measure to the Baptists; indeed, he had a positive antipathy to their tenet of immersion. Of course he would not refuse to immerse an applicant, but there is no evidence that he ever had occasion to; he disliked the practice as it was commonly conducted and felt strong aversion to an intolerant insistence upon it, with its uncharitable inference that none that are not immersed are truly baptized.

In public worship he was rubrical, in a lax age. He encouraged congregational song, though he himself had little or no ear for music. His favorite hymn was the evangelical classic—Toplady's 'Rock of Ages.' In prayer he knelt facing the people,—naturally, for he had never seen the contrary position; it should be remembered that the people turned and knelt at their seats. That was the evangelical improvement upon the sitting service of the latitudinarians. His sermons—always written—were short; he adhered pretty closely to the twenty-minute standard. His delivery was quiet, almost without gesture. His style abounded in adjectives, and he loved to reiterate and underscore significant words—marks, these, of fervent feeling. His preaching was characterized by the true, the indispensable evangelical pathos; it sprang from and appealed to the affections; if not great, it was absolutely sincere and was richly blessed. He knew and could track

the windings of the heart. He was never weary of repeating a passage from the third chapter of St. Peter's epistle: 'Be ye all of one mind, having compassion one of another; love as brethren, be pitiful, be courteous.' 'The sum of the gospel,' he used to say, 'is sympathy for man'; Christ's love even to death for erring man was his constant theme.

Let us hearken to his own accents in the most characteristic of his sermons, 'The Message to Peter'—given in the last chapter of St. Mark's gospel. Especially noteworthy is the argument of the affections for the divinity of Christ.

'Although the name of Peter is incidentally mentioned, yet, we doubt not, it was introduced for a substantial and merciful reason, and that a great deal was conveyed in the simple addition of that one word— . . . a considerate and merciful afterthought, suggested by his late shameful downfall.

'Our Lord knew that Peter was so much mortified and crushed by a sense of his guilt that he would be ashamed to acknowledge himself a disciple, and that he needed to be encouraged, to be inspired with confidence. Perhaps, without some such merciful intimation on the part of the Saviour, Peter might have gone off in despair and have become reckless and hardened and lost. And this was the more likely, as he seems to have been naturally of an ardent, impulsive and sensitive temperament. And therefore it was that our blessed Lord, with the most delicate tenderness, caused a special message to be sent to Peter.

'Ah, what mighty power is there in one word of kindness judiciously uttered! . . . Oh, the misery that might be prevented and the happiness that might be conferred if there were a little more considerate kindness in the world!

'How different the conduct of our Saviour from the

spirit of the world! . . . What a delicate regard did he thus manifest for the sensibility, the wounded pride and lacerated feelings of a fallen man! How interesting and lovely does the character of the Saviour thus appear! How infinitely exalted above the narrow, selfish, unforgiving, malicious and vindictive spirit of the world! . . . Most justly might it be inferred that such spontaneous and exuberant goodness could have emanated only from the abode of heaven, from the bosom of the God and Father of Mercies.

‘Let the penitent be emboldened by the restoration of Peter to return to the Lord in faith, to take hold of his promises of mercy. . . . Let it be well remembered that all those deep convictions of sin, all this hungering and thirsting after righteousness, all this struggling against inward corruptions, are the messages which the Saviour sends through his Spirit of grace to call the penitent back to himself and to restore him to the paths of peace and salvation.

‘One of the great duties earnestly enjoined by our Saviour and powerfully enforced by his example is that of forgiveness of injuries. . . . But alas! how little of this forgiving spirit is exhibited even among those who call themselves the followers of the meek and lowly Jesus and who often repeat the words of his prayer. With what exacting tenacity do people cling to their own rights, and with what stubborn perseverance do they hold out in hatred and revenge! How eagerly do they catch at any plausible arguments to soothe the pride of self and to justify hatred and malice under the name of “principle” and “conscience”! And even when people do extend forgiveness it is oftentimes reluctantly extorted and with a bad grace, in an unkind and unfeeling manner, in a spirit of chiding and reproach, dwelling upon the errors and faults of the

offender, harrowing up his feelings of shame and remorse and thus by a rude and rough hand deepening the wound it professes to heal. . . . Ah, how little is thought of the wounded pride and mortified feelings and penitential sorrows and inward conflicts of soul experienced by those who make confession and ask for forgiveness at our hands!

'How many are there, now crushed and fallen into sin, who need only the look of kindness and the voice of love or some little expression of sympathy to win them back to the paths of virtue! . . . What a want there is in the world of spiritual sympathy, of compassion for the faults and infirmities, for the wounds and diseases of the soul! . . . How seldom are those to be found who would send a kind and inviting message to an offending though penitent Peter!

'Ah, if we would be Christians in deed and in truth . . . let us cultivate the spirit of forbearance, of charity, of love; let us remember our own failings and learn to look with pity and indulgence on the infirmities of others; let the law of kindness be ever in our hearts and its accents familiar to our lips; and let us be tender of the name and the rights and the feelings of those around us.'

The preacher concluded with the collect for the Sunday before Lent,—'Pour into our hearts that most excellent gift of charity.'

He was happy in addressing children. It was the era of the introduction into America of the system of Sunday-schools; whether he adopted the idea at this time we cannot say; he was faithful in catechizing the little ones before service in the afternoon, closing the exercise with a simple talk. Through clear memories of his own childish experience, and having been brought up in a large family, he knew their temptations, their griefs and joys, and could



always engage their attention and set them thinking. The childlike in his own nature appealed to them, quick as children's intuition into character always is; in private they would cluster round him, confessing his kindly charm; their elders had no chance at him when there were children in the room.

He was filled with the true spirit of missions; he not only explored his own county thoroughly but extended his missionary tours and labors over four adjacent counties also. In the course of his pastorate he had the privilege of holding the first service in a dozen churches. The now flourishing parish at Wytheville—then Wythe Court-house—is a case in point: it originated with a single communicant, a lady, who wrote asking him to hold a service there. The distance—almost a hundred miles—caused him not a moment's hesitation; he accepted the invitation with alacrity. The smallness of a congregation did not in the least dampen his zeal; he did his best, irrespective of numbers; indeed, he loved to address small gatherings of the faithful, and would preach with the utmost earnestness to a dozen souls.

He excelled as a PASTOR. His disposition was social and he thoroughly enjoyed parish visiting. While making a pastoral call he talked little of himself, was a good listener, but gently changed the conversation if it took a gossiping turn. He took an unfeigned, engrossing interest in the spiritual interests of every member of the family. There was that in him that elicited confidence, and he loved to handle individual cases,—the revivalist's treatment of them in the gross was distasteful to him. He never lost an opportunity while on his tours to enter into religious conversation, which he would conduct with as much care as he would take in preparing a sermon; indeed, specific cases of

religious difficulty often fatigued him more than preaching—but such labor told perhaps as much in the end, and so, stone by stone, he built up his parish. To the poorest and lowliest he was most courteous; he early took an especial interest in the religious instruction of the slaves, and inculcated upon masters their duties toward them. In the most difficult cases, of sickness, spiritual depression, bereavement, he was at his best—was in his element,—because his sympathies, unlike those of most, needed no tutoring but were spontaneous, flowing forth in times of sorrow in perfect measure and degree. It is remembered that once, during the severe illness of a friend, he rode daily for a week upon his ‘old gray horse’ to visit him—and the round trip was eighteen miles. At the bedside of the sick he exercised without restraint his gift of extempore prayer—without which such pastoral success as his is impossible. There is extant a letter of his dated March 4th, 1829 (the day that Jackson and Calhoun were sworn into office) that illustrates his system of pastoral correspondence as well as visiting, and shows how he seized the moment when a thoughtless heart was softened by affliction to strike a saving blow. It was addressed to one who had just been left a widower with two young children:

‘Sympathizing most sincerely with you under your late heavy bereavement I would venture in the spirit of friendship to write you a few lines which the knowledge of your character induces the hope will be received without giving any offence. In the present gloom and desolation of your prospects, where shall you look for peace and hope and consolation? Here the world will officiously offer its aid and persuade you to drown your cares and sorrows in its hurry and its bustle, its follies and its vanities. But my

dear sir, I would cherish the hope that you are too wise and have seen and felt too much of this world's emptiness to be imposed upon by its false pretensions. What can the votaries of this world expect, what have they ever gained as their reward, but disappointment, despair and misery? Though for a moment they may drown reflection in the giddy round of folly, yet there will be periods when conscience *will* be heard and felt; when the soul filled with horror and writhing under the anguish of self-inflicted torments sees that sin is misery and acknowledges that there is a just God who governs the universe. Go not then to a false and deceitful world but to the religion of the gospel, to the God of heaven for comfort and consolation. Oh! embrace the doctrines of that blessed Saviour who being touched with the feeling of our infirmities mercifully offers his rest to the weary and heavy laden. These doctrines by unfolding the character of God, by explaining the real condition of man and the high destinies of his future existence, by connecting the present state with another life and thereby solving all the mysteries of divine providence, by breaking down the partition wall between heaven and earth and holding forth to guilty mortals the promises of pardon and salvation, give to the soul that peace and support which can nowhere else be found. Will you not accept them? Remember, my dear sir, your high responsibility; you must act not only with reference to yourself but to two precious immortal beings left you as a legacy by one now in heaven and who loved you with a love stronger than death. Remember,—those dear children look up to you to guide them, both by precept and example. They have a right to expect that you will conduct them to their mother in glory. Let me then affectionately beg and entreat

you for the sake of your own soul, for the sake of your precious children, for the sake of your dear departed wife, to give up your heart to the service of God, who now freely offers you the pardon of sin and the comforts of his Spirit. Oh, turn from this poor perishing world and with a holy resolution fix your affections on the realities of heaven.'

Through and under all his active labors was felt a life of interior contemplation, of communion with God. He did not separate these states of the soul and so needed not to apportion specific hours to each; in his life they were inwoven. He derived much help in his meditations from the saintly Bishop Wilson's '*Sacra Privata*': his copy of the book still exists, worn with constant use.

He was regular in attendance upon diocesan conventions and faithful in the discharge of his duties in committees of which he was repeatedly appointed a member. In 1826 he could report that the interests of the church in his county were slowly but steadily advancing; and he was put upon a committee with William Wilmer, Meade and others, 'to take into consideration the state of the church in this diocess.' In several subsequent years he served upon the same. In 1827 he reported as follows: 'The prejudices against our forms are rapidly subsiding; the confidence of the public is regained and the affections of the young, particularly, are secured. The congregations are always seriously attentive. . . . Though the gain to the church has been rather in the way of moral weight than of numerical accession, yet since the last convention six communicants have been added [making the total number sixteen]. By the erection of two churches in a small and infant parish, the congregations have not hitherto been enabled to contribute' to external charities, 'but for the future

better things may be expected'—and, we may add, the parish did not disappoint these expectations but paid its assessments with commendable regularity. 'In each of the churches a Bible class has been formed, with the prospect of good.' In his convention address, speaking of his first visitation in Russell parish, Bishop Moore uttered the following eloquent tribute: 'I passed into the county of Bedford and consecrated two new churches—churches owing their existence to the pious and disinterested labors of the Reverend Mr. Cobbs. Since the ordination of Mr. Cobbs several offers have been made to him by the acceptance of either of which his situation would certainly have been much improved; but with a magnanimity of mind which rendered him superior to pecuniary considerations and with that regard to the infant state of the church which reflects the greatest credit on his piety, he declined them all and determined to remain in his present situation. I mention this circumstance not only because it is honorable to the character of Mr. Cobbs but from a hope that his parishioners will consider it their duty to use every means in their power to contribute to the comfort of himself and his family.'

This year he was made one of a committee 'to examine the parochial reports.'

He was absent—was it through sickness, or the sickness and death of his mother?—from the convention of 1828, but reported that in a year his roll of communicants had nearly doubled, and that beside his 'sabbatical ministrations in his two churches' he had for some time past 'officiated on Saturdays in various and remote parts of the county,' and had been pleased to find 'a general kind feeling' manifested toward him. He was commissioned with others to

solicit contributions within the diocese for its theological school, and was elected a delegate to the approaching General Convention.

In 1829 a diocesan missionary society was instituted and he was put upon its executive committee, and was beside appointed a trustee of the General Theological Seminary. He presented the following glowing parochial report: 'The state of the parish is more interesting and encouraging than at any former period. During the past year the spirit of the Lord has been poured out on the congregations and a number have been brought to profess an experimental knowledge of the truth. Thirty-two members have been added to the communion and an increasing spirit of prayer and zeal seems to prevail among the people. . . . The rector is cheered with the hope that a day of better things is dawning on our Zion. In all the southwestern counties of Virginia the field is ripe for the harvest, and we only need ministers of self-denying habits to enter in and labor.'

In this optimistic mood he went on to Philadelphia to attend the General Convention, which met in the middle of August. It was the first time he had passed the boundary of his native state. And now without doubt for the first time he met William Mercer Green—a delegate to the same convention from North Carolina. Other marked men—whom to know was a liberal education—served with him in the house of clerical and lay deputies: Doctors Jackson Kemper, B. T. Onderdonk and C. E. Gadsden, Alonzo Potter, Francis L. Hawks, John Henry Hopkins, John Johns. Milnor, Muhlenberg, Bedell and Tyng were admitted by special vote and attended the sessions of the house. It was a goodly evangelical gathering. In the house of bishops were the patriarchal White and Cobbs'

own diocesan, with Griswold, Hobart and Ravenscroft. Before the next convention met the last two had left the world. The chief interest of this session was the consecration of William Meade as assistant bishop of Virginia.

Cobbs preached the opening sermon at the Virginia convention of 1830. He had to acknowledge in his report that his enthusiastic expectations of the previous year had been somewhat disappointed: 'Not as much has been fulfilled as was anticipated.' Still, a 'favorable change in the public mind,' in regard to the character of the church and her services, was plainly perceptible; and among his new communicants was a candidate for orders.

The assistant bishop could speak with unqualified praise: 'I cannot leave this parish,' he said in relating his first year's work to the convention, 'without noticing how the rich blessing of heaven has been poured out on the zealous exertions and affectionate preaching of Mr. Cobbs. But a few years since and there were not more than two or three communicants in the county and not a place of public worship belonging to the church. Now there are more than seventy communicants and three places of public worship where service is regularly performed, besides many private houses which are freely thrown open for religious exercises. But what is far more important is that good evidence is afforded of the prevalence of real piety, and it is pleasing to perceive the animation and holy zeal with which the services of the church are conducted.'

At the following convention which met in Norfolk Cobbs made the acquaintance of Leonidas Polk, who appeared as assistant minister of the Monumental Church—the bishop's church in Richmond. They served together upon the executive committee of the missionary society. At the next

meeting Cobbs was continued on that committee—but Polk was in London. Of Russell parish the rector reported that 'during a great part of the last year there was manifested a deep and general interest in religion, and he was gratified to perceive a number of pious and valuable members added to the communion. But at present he is constrained to say that this interest has abated, that many are becoming more indifferent to the claims of religion.' And yet he has occasion 'gratefully to acknowledge the liberality of his parishioners in having subscribed nearly two thousand dollars for the purchase of a farm for the benefit of the rector and his family.'

In 1833 the depression of the parish or of his spirits was at the lowest point: 'Throughout all the region there has been a general indifference towards religion. The houses of public worship are thinly and irregularly attended, the zeal of multitudes has abated, and many who gave fair promise of being faithful servants of the cross have returned to the world. The rector is pained to say that his congregations have been affected by the prevailing spirit of lukewarmness, and he has had the mortification to see some of the communicants apostatize from the faith and bring upon themselves the necessity of being separated from the communion of the saints.'

Yet there were causes for gratitude. The faithful members generally 'are becoming more decidedly attached to the distinctive principles and doctrines of the church.' Amid the divisions of new sects, continually multiplying, 'many are beginning to see that our ancient church presents to the humble and honest inquirer after truth a place of quiet and an ark of safety.' Despite backsliding, the communicant roll at last touched one hundred.



One would like to look deeper into the causes of the spiritual losses above recorded—but it was an emotional age, when acceleration was quickly succeeded by retardation or retrogression, elevation by depression; and doubtless the preacher's sensitive temperament registered accurately the disturbances of soul around him.

His recent experience and discouragement contributed to make the prospect of a change more acceptable,—for now his light began to shine abroad: the humble and faithful priest and missionary was found out; he was called to a position not as laborious but equally, perhaps more exacting and more conspicuous,—that of chaplain to the university of his native state.

That university had only been in operation for about eight years. It was the dominant interest of Jefferson's old age, and he lived to see it open. In it his views of education were embodied, as a standard for future generations. That individual preference and capacity might have free scope, there was no prescribed course of study. From its teaching the 'poison' of federalism was sedulously excluded, and of course there could be no 'public establishment of religious instruction.' 'A professorship of theology' (that 'charlatanry of the mind'), wrote Jefferson to the like-minded Thomas Cooper, 'should have no place in our institution.' He congratulated himself that he had secured Dr. Cooper as head of the infant institution—when from various pulpits, especially the Presbyterian, arose such a 'hue and cry' that the latter thought it best to decline the appointment; 'they charge him with Unitarianism,' said Jefferson, 'as presumptuously as if it were a crime.' It is manifest that the unexpected vigor of this opposition postponed for some years the opening of the university, thus

marking the rise of religious zeal: thirty years before the appointment would have created no excitement. At last the skilful politician struck the right chord, pointing out that troops of young Virginians were at Harvard and other northern colleges imbibing principles at variance with the Missouri compromise: 'those who are against us are fashioning the minds of our youth'; we should have a university that should be the 'rallying centre of the South and the West.' Under the response to that stimulus the buildings were soon ready for occupancy, but it appears that the faculty did not assemble until the winter of 1826. Among the students that year was Edgar Allan Poe. Some sessions later a contagious disease twice visited the university, and several students died of it: Bishop Meade having been invited to preach there improved the occasion, pointing the moral: the visitation was God's rod of affliction—a judgment designed to convince men of their dependence on him. We are left to infer that a result of the impression made by the sermon was the creation of a chaplaincy, of which Cobbs was the first incumbent.

Other evidence of religious awakening, of strong and deep reaction against Jeffersonian ideas, is afforded by the history of the College of South Carolina. For fifteen years Dr. Cooper was connected with that institution, at first as professor of chemistry, for most of the time as president. He was not only antichristian and an infidel—he was absolutely irreligious. For him matter and motion made up the universe, and Christianity was the greatest of humbugs. Yet as president he had to conduct daily prayers at the college!—the effect upon the mind of the students can be imagined. Little by little the public conscience mounted against this worse than grotesque anomaly; among those

that felt it keenly was the young Stephen Elliott. He had graduated at the college with distinction and had then studied law and practised in Charleston and Beaufort, indulging meanwhile in literary pursuits and social gaieties. But in the year 1831 he was deeply moved by the preaching of a Presbyterian minister at Beaufort; his high spirits were chastened; he was converted to serious piety, and turning from the world with all its pleasures and prospects of advancement, he sought admission to the sacred ministry. While he was prosecuting his studies to that end there took place, in 1834, the moral and spiritual righting of the college: Dr. Cooper and other instructors were discharged, the faculty was reorganized, and a chaplaincy, with chair of Christian Evidences attached, was created. Dr. William Capers was the first nominee for the new position, and upon his declination Stephen Elliott was elected and accepted the appointment. The young Gregg, who had gone up to the college at the time of that exciting crisis, enjoyed the new professor's ministrations and instruction for the remainder of his course.

At that very period the policy of excluding religion from education received its finishing touch, reached its superfine limit, in the foundation of Girard College: not only were ministers of the gospel excluded from its teaching force—they were even forbidden to trespass on the premises. The force of prejudice—as illiberal as the sheerest dogmatism—could no further go: it was in fact the expiring effort of a past generation, an offence to the awakened conscience of a new. Undoubtedly the second quarter of the nineteenth century will ever be looked back to as having given an extraordinary propulsion to the cause of Christian education in America. About the year 1825 Trinity, Hobart,

and Kenyon colleges were founded, and in 1828 Muhlenberg began his richly influential labors. To afford education for the ministry free of charge was a leading motive in the minds of the founders of Amherst College. The Methodists and Baptists were active, especially in Virginia, where the former founded Randolph-Macon and Emory-and-Henry, the latter, Rector and Richmond colleges, and in North Carolina, Wake Forest. In 1841 Alexander Campbell started a seminary for his sect at Bethany, Virginia, and the Cumberland Presbyterians organized their university at Lebanon, Tennessee, in 1844. Nor were the Roman Catholics behind, with their seminaries of Spring Hill, by Mobile,—Mount St. Mary's, Emmitsburg,—St. John's, Fordham,—Holy Cross, Worcester,—and St. Mary's, Delaware. In 1842 Bishop Whittingham and in 1846 Bishop Doane opened colleges in Maryland and New Jersey respectively.

This kindling enthusiasm for Christian education found earnest response in the breast of the young Leonidas Polk, even from the time when as a cadet at West Point he made his Christian profession. That event profoundly impressed his comrades; indeed, it was one of the most interesting phenomena of that evangelic age. Up to the date of his conversion no religious influence is known to have ruffled the dead sea of infidelity in which from its inception the academy had been immersed. Among the officers there was no professing Christian, among the cadets no evidence of any religious interest, but much of irreligion. The chaplain in Polk's time was Charles Pettit McIlvaine; for nearly a year he had performed the duties of his office, giving addresses upon the evidences of Christianity, without eliciting any perceptible response. It was disheartening work—

until at length a single cadet became sufficiently interested to call upon him. McIlvaine gave him a couple of tracts, one of which in an opportune moment Polk caught up and read—and by its means the work of God was wrought in his soul. It happened (as we say) that he had long been brooding over a severe scholastic disappointment, embittered by a sense of injustice; the collapse of youthful ambition opened his soul to spiritual influences. He too called upon the chaplain, and evinced by voice and manner that his spirit was profoundly stirred. Henceforth he knelt in prayer at the chapel services—and to the feeling heart that must ever remain the most affecting scene in his eventful history, and one upon which the imagination will most love to dwell: the solitary kneeling figure and bowed head among the seated ranks of cadets.

The feeling first awakened among his companions was simply one of overpowering curiosity,—that Polk the high-spirited, the talented, the soldierly, should suddenly turn pious! They could not understand it, but all knew his habitual conscientiousness and none could help respecting him; through investigation of the case others were touched to seriousness, and ere long the sight of a 'praying squad' rewarded the chaplain for his year of seemingly ineffectual labor. Polk's was the first recorded case in the history of the institution of a cadet making public profession of religion, the first instance there of the ministration of adult baptism. His father chafed greatly at his change and, when summer came and his son returned home, would leave the room if he sought to turn the conversation to what was nearest to his heart. A professorship at Amherst College was now offered the young man, and he was inclined to accept it: he was conscious of the narrowness of

his military training and greatly desired an opportunity to read, to attain the proportion of culture,—but his father, ambitious of military distinction for him, would not allow it. And now, to his parents' great chagrin, Polk's heart was irresistibly inclined to the Christian ministry. He had to be satisfied with his father's unwilling acquiescence in his resignation of his lieutenancy after successful graduation in the summer of 1827. Even his mother disapproved the step, and his father told him that he was spoiling a good soldier to make a poor preacher. In the fall of the year he entered the seminary at Alexandria; the change of spiritual and intellectual environment was complete. He was seriously handicapped by lack of suitable literary preparation, but at Alexandria that made the less difference because everything was subordinated, as in his own mind, to evangelical divinity. The course in church history was quite inadequate. In the spring of 1830 he was ordered deacon by Bishop Moore and, as we have seen, became his assistant at the Monumental Church, and the year following encountered Cobbs in the convention at Norfolk. But his health had for some time been seriously affected, and his physician prescribed a trip abroad. He sailed accordingly in the summer and spent the winter in Italy. In Rome he thought oftener of St. Paul than of classic story; in fact, owing to the preoccupation of his mind and its practical nature and lack of historical knowledge he was totally unprepared to appreciate the remains of ancient and mediæval art amid which he moved. Paris impressed him with its worldliness, and he was glad to get to London. He was delighted with the rural culture of England, and wrote home: 'The more I see of those who are without slaves the more I am prepared to say that we are seriously wronging

ourselves by retaining them.' In June he was at Oxford, where he enjoyed everything but the choral service which, beautiful as it was, seemed to him wholly designed for effect. The university presented, however, the fairest realization he had yet seen of the ideal union of culture and piety, and he sailed homeward in the autumn of 1832 with a great conception in his brain. That very year, in view of the great need of the church in the southwest, the diocesan convention of Tennessee, of which Otey was an active member, entered in its journal a resolution, 'if funds can be obtained, to establish at some eligible location in this diocese a classical and theological seminary of learning, in order to educate or aid in the education of persons who are desirous of obtaining Holy Orders.'

After ordination by Bishop Ravenscroft, Otey had settled in Maury county, Tennessee, and while doing mission work supported himself by teaching school, meditating much on a union of religious instruction with 'the lessons of the school-room.' At his earnest entreaty, Ravenscroft visited Nashville in 1829 and presided at the first convention of the infant diocese, which later enjoyed the nursing care of Meade and Ives. In the spring of 1833, after a winter spent at his home in Raleigh, Polk also removed to Maury county, where he occupied lands belonging to his family, about fifty miles south of Nashville. That year, the canonical number of resident clergy having been reached, Otey was elected bishop of Tennessee. He was consecrated at Philadelphia, early in 1834—a memorable year in our review,—by the venerable White, assisted by both the Onderdonks and Doane. At the first convention over which he presided he spoke, though not hopefully, of the prospects of theological education in the diocese, but hav-

ing been invited to visit Mississippi by the standing committee there, he encountered on all hands such illiteracy and impiety that he was profoundly impressed by the urgency of the need and the importance and magnitude of the problem. On his return from a second visitation in 1836 he wrote of his 'ardent desire, connected with the journey, . . . for a literary and theological seminary to meet the wants of Episcopalians in Tennessee, Mississippi and Louisiana.' The imperative need, in view of the exclusion of Christian teaching by state institutions, 'of combining education and religion in order to form a moral sentiment against the wickedness and lawlessness of the Southwest,—to train up clergy, teachers, and enlightened, virtuous citizens'; the existing necessity of sending youth northward for education, at the risk of their health and of the weakening of local ties; the increasing wealth of the region,—all seemed to him arguments sufficient for beginning the work without delay. The convention concurred at all points in the views of its diocesan and referred the matter to a committee (of which Polk was chairman) which recommended the adoption of the bishop's suggestion that agents be appointed forthwith to canvass the territory for subscriptions.

Cobbs meantime was justifying his friends' confidence, vindicating in his modest way the perfect consonance of Christian doctrine and human learning in the intellectual capital of Virginia. It was a difficult task, requiring a rather exceptional temperament, in a community where religion and its ministers had been regarded with aversion and contempt. It would be interesting and helpful to know precisely what his methods were—but a single glimpse must suffice. Soon after his settlement at Charlottesville



he was dining in company when a student present—unaware of his office, we may hope—displayed his talent by heaping criticism and ridicule upon parsons and preachers. When dinner was over Cobbs went up to him and taking him by the hand said, ‘It is not often, my dear sir, that we of the clergy have the benefit of hearing our faults so frankly commented upon. I thank you, and trust that I shall profit by your observations.’ One can picture the lad’s confusion of countenance; he was converted by the incident into one of the chaplain’s most devoted friends. Cobbs’ kindly sensibilities shine through the report of his year’s work at the university: ‘He is confident that a religious influence is decidedly gaining ground, and he looks forward with pleasing anticipations to the time when that institution will send forth many champions in the cause of the gospel. There is manifested a great regard for religion and its ordinances, and the undersigned can truly say that he never preached to a more orderly and attentive congregation than at the University of Virginia. He has been uniformly treated with respect and kindness by the faculty and the students; indeed, he should feel himself ungrateful if he did not bear this public testimony to the kindness and liberality manifested toward him, as well by the students as by the different families connected with the institution. Among the students are some ten or twelve who are members of different churches; these young men have been a great comfort and support to the officiating minister, and though of different churches have been literally a band of brothers. For several sessions they have kept up among themselves a weekly prayer-meeting, in which the cause of religion at that institution is a special subject of supplication. If ever the undersigned has heard earnest and

fervent prayers, it has been while listening to those pious young men praying for a spiritual blessing on the University of Virginia. There is now in operation, and has been for several sessions, a Sunday-school under the supervision of the young men; this school, though necessarily small, is admirably conducted and is in a most flourishing state. A Bible society has also been formed, of which about ninety of the students are members.'

While serving as chaplain, Cobbs took charge of the church at Charlottesville, which had been in a depressed condition. His successor testified to the vivifying effect of his labors in that parish.

When his year's chaplaincy was over, he was urged to remain yet another session, but thought it best to return to home scenes and his former labors. It appears that the growth of his native parish was such as to warrant a division; a portion of it accordingly was set off as West Russell parish, and was received into union with the convention of 1836.

At the same convention a new religious organ, 'The Southern Churchman,' was earnestly commended to the favor of the diocese by both the bishops. On a previous occasion Bishop Moore had praised its 'moderation and respect for the opinions of other Christian societies.'

It is not too much to say that Cobbs' chaplaincy, short as it was, wrought a complete change in the estimate put upon religion at the University of Virginia, working out the sceptical, Jeffersonian leaven, and initiating a new tradition. It is not a little remarkable how fondly and for how many years that single year of labor was remembered: 'His reputation as an excellent, God-fearing man, beloved by all, revered by those who knew him best, reached me'—writes

Professor Schele De Vere—'when I came there in 1844.' Some years before that date a 'neat and commodious chapel' had been provided there for divine service.

Before we pass on to his pastorate at Petersburg it would be fitting here to indicate, once for all, his relation to the great political controversies of that day. Cobbs was a Whig—a member by sympathy and conviction of that party whose external record is scarce anything but a series of defeats,—that saw its favorite measures checkmated one by one,—that failed to put its hero into the president's chair—and that yet accomplished the indispensable task of keeping the country together for thirty critical years. The rise of the party was symptomatic of a new stage in the national consciousness; in a word, the nation, which was a theory only in 1789, had in Clay's and Webster's time become a fact, an entity, a being with a history of half a century, round which memories, affections and hopes might cluster. Cobbs could not, like his neighbor John Randolph, circumscribe his affections by the boundaries of his native state, much as he loved her,—could not conceive and speak of her as his 'country.' He saw that there could be, ought to be and in fact was such a sentiment as love of country, together with sectional and state loves. In a generous soul like his we can discern that expansion of sympathy to the utmost confines of the great republic,—which is in fact so large that few souls are able to contain it. Happily there were enough like him to hold the states together for one generation more.

The growth of the Whig party in the years 1833-'36 was truly phenomenal in the land of Jefferson and Randolph. It was a consequence of a recent crisis in state politics,—a repetition of the old feud between the plain and the

mountain. The revolutionary constitution was outgrown; the centre of population had shifted while that of political power remained unaltered. Long-standing dissatisfaction with this inequality came to a climax about the year 1830 in a struggle for extension of the suffrage and redistribution of representation in the state legislature, in which the new settlers in the highlands were pitted against the old, slave-holding families of the 'tide-water' counties. The latter, be it noted, were adherents of the Episcopal church—the former, of the various evangelical sects. Alexander Campbell (with whom Cobbs was acquainted) was active in the democratic campaign. In their recoil from the levelling, Jeffersonian tendencies of the highlanders the wealthy planters of the plain and shore threw themselves into the arms of the Whigs.

We have made mention of slavery. There was a remarkable development of opinion in regard to it in the very period under review. In 1831 Nat Turner's insurrection created wide-spread alarm: some of the speeches occasioned by it in the Virginian assembly the following year must have warmed the hearts of the abolitionists, then in their feeblest infancy as a party. It is perfectly plain that some Virginians were as fully awake to the ills of slavery as any of their northern critics,—perhaps more so. The historical opinion concerning it—what we may call the Virginian tradition,—the view of Jefferson, Madison and indeed all the southern statesmen of the first generation of the republic,—was that it was a necessary evil, an inherited evil, it was hoped, transient. And necessary for the clearing of vast tracts of land it apparently was, and necessary in this climate and for the production of the great staples negro labor apparently is, while to the masters slavery was an

undoubted ill,—a burden, an anxiety, a heavy cost and responsibility. But now, partly in consequence of the opening up to it, through Indian treaties, of great tracts of the best cotton land, partly in opposition to incipient moral aggression and British emancipation, there sprang up what we may call the Carolinian opinion—that slavery was a positive good, to be perpetuated. And in fact it was an almost unalloyed good to the slave—an indispensable, probationary middle term, civilizing and Christianizing, between the horrors of African savagery and heathenism and the approaching stage of freedom. We note that this view synchronized with the southward migration of leadership in the national councils. Thus there were three opinions: a mass of conservative sentiment, and the abolition and Carolinian views, both equally radical, and destined to intensify and enhance at the expense of the first. It is needless to state to which of the three our subject gave in his undeviating adhesion.

In 1837 his friend Green became professor of rhetoric and *belles-lettres* (nauseous term!) at his alma mater, Chapel Hill. (It is to be noted how many of the pioneer bishops of the south were conversant, through experience, with educational problems.) The year following his friend Polk was chosen by the General Convention to be missionary bishop of the southwest, and was consecrated at Cincinnati in December by Bishops Meade, Bosworth Smith, McIlvaine and Otey, McIlvaine preaching the sermon. ‘The chaplain again met the beloved cadet.’ The new bishop was but thirty-two years of age—one of the youngest ever consecrated. He set out straightway, in January, 1839, like an itinerant apostle of old, upon a tour of evangelical exploration over his vast jurisdiction which took him six

months to accomplish—for his charge included the states of Alabama, Mississippi, Louisiana and Arkansas, the Indian Territory and the republic of Texas! He travelled as best he could, chiefly on horseback through brake and briar, through woods, over prairies, through swamps, fording streams. On occasion he would take a river-boat, to find himself amid the motley company described by Thorpe in one of his inimitable sketches: 'Here may be seen jostling together the wealthy southern planter and the peddler of tin-ware from New England—the northern merchant and the southern jockey—a venerable bishop and a desperate gambler—the land speculator and the honest farmer—professional men of all creeds and characters—men from every state in the Union and from every portion of the globe—Wolverenes, Suckers, Hoosiers, Buckeyes, and Corn-crackers, beside a plentiful sprinkling of the half-horse and half-alligator species of men, who are peculiar to "old Mississippi," and who appear to gain a livelihood simply by going up and down the river.' Little demand for the sedate Episcopal church in such a crowd! In Texas particularly Polk encountered a disorderly society, for the raw republic was a refuge for malefactors and—after the violent monetary shrinkage of 1837—a paradise of debtors: as he wended his way among them it was a fruitful theme of conjecture to which class the bishop belonged!

While Polk was on this picturesque missionary journey, Rutledge removed, after years of hard and faithful work in his native state, to the territory of Florida, having been called to Trinity Church, St. Augustine. Into that missionary jurisdiction he imported the strong churchly views of Hobart and Dehon. At the same time, also, Thomas Atkinson, who had turned from the practice of law to divinity, removed from a cure in Norfolk to one in Lynchburg. Of

all the good men—some of them truly great—in this group that we are studying, Atkinson most resembled Cobbs in disposition and view, and was of all he whom Cobbs grew to love the most. Finally, also in this year 1839, Cobbs himself effected his second and, as it proved, final removal from home. He was, of course, by this time well known throughout the diocese, and was called to take charge of Bristol parish, Petersburg. There he introduced observance of the saints' days, and exhibited a pattern of priestly life never witnessed in that place before. In 1841 there was a 'general awakening of souls' throughout the borough; his report at the next convention yields valuable evidence of his method of improving such periods of revival—of which this was the chief in his experience. He was thankful to be able to give a favorable account of the condition and prospects of the parish: 'For several months during the past year there was evidently visible a great degree of sensibility to divine truth, which encouraged the hope that the Spirit of God was moving upon the hearts of many. This sensibility continued to increase till about the beginning of winter, when it was heightened to a very remarkable degree of interest. Such was the desire to hear the word that the church was opened for divine service once and frequently twice a day for the space of two months. But whilst the rector felt it his duty and privilege to cherish this religious awakening by multiplying his services, he carefully abstained from all measures promotive of artificial excitement. The prayers of the church were invariably and exclusively used on every occasion of worship, and no other means were employed to produce effect but the simple exhibition of gospel truth, followed up by prompt and vigilant pastoral visits.'

This 'time of refreshing' completely covered over certain

old dissensions in the parish which the reconciling, uniting spirit of the new rector had already done much to heal. Cobbs prepared ninety-three souls for confirmation that year: when the day came, and the candidates were invited to come forward, 'it seemed as if the whole congregation was in motion.' Including accessions from other parishes, one hundred and fourteen names were added to the communicant roll, almost doubling its number. The number of baptisms the same year was forty-two, of whom nineteen were adults. The congregation speedily outgrew the seating capacity of the church; in consequence of the overflow a mission was begun. 'For want of seats to accommodate those who might be induced to attend the services of the church, the ladies of the parish determined to employ a missionary to preach to the poor of the town, and especially to officiate amongst the families dependent upon the factories.'

Certain distressing phenomena—the most perplexing cases in pastoral theology—that almost inevitably ensue upon such religious excitement,—morbid introspection, 'poring upon one's corruptions within,' doubts of salvation, melancholy sinking to despair,—elicited Cobbs' greatest homiletic effort, 'The Doubting Christian Encouraged,' upon the text, 'Lord, I believe; help thou mine unbelief.' It is an inquiry 'into some of the causes of a weak and a doubting faith among believers. For it is obvious that a large number of them are laboring under a heavy burden of doubts and fears; that their spiritual prospects are often confused and overclouded, and that the calmness of a settled and prevailing peace is a stranger to their bosoms.

'It is true that in many cases these fears proceed from neglect of duty, from the consciousness of transgressions,



from worldly-mindedness and from not attending upon the ordinances of the gospel. In all such cases it is right and proper that Christians should be distressed; it is a mercy that they are so: these doubts and fears may be the means of their safety, the way by which they are to be brought to self-examination, to repentance and reformation. . . . But yet there are numbers of humble, sincere, conscientious and tender-hearted people who are often distressed with doubts . . . proceeding from the want of a clear view of the doctrines of the gospel.

‘1. Some persons confound faith with assurance, and think they cannot have a saving faith unless they are certain of being converted and accepted.

‘To these very common difficulties, experienced by humble and serious inquirers, we would say that faith is a different thing from assurance, from a certain confidence of being converted. Persons may be very confident of being converted, may think to have an assurance of the pardon of their sins, and yet have no true saving faith, no vital religion. Indeed, it sometimes happens that those who have the most confidence and assurance have the least claims to true evangelical faith.

‘Faith is a looking to Christ, is an humble trusting in Christ, an acceptance of Christ; it is a belief in the word and promise and power of Christ; it is submission to his laws; it is the resting upon Christ of one’s whole hope of mercy and salvation; it is the embracing of Christ as he is set forth in the gospel, as the way, the truth, and the life.

. . . As to the doctrine sometimes taught, that we cannot be Christians unless we know the time and place of our conversion, we would remark that according to this standard of judging we cannot know that we are alive unless we can

remember the time and place of our natural birth: that where this evidence is wanting we are dead and have never been born. . . . And as regards the witness of the Holy Spirit, we must determine that important fact not from any glow or excitement or transport of feeling, not from any notion or fancy or impression fastening itself upon the mind, but by calmly comparing our exercises, views, feelings, hopes, desires and conduct with the word of God as revealed in the gospel.

' 2. Some persons labor under doubts and fears from misapprehending the whole plan of gospel salvation. Being awakened to the knowledge of the truth, seeing and feeling themselves to be poor, miserable, guilty sinners, [they] are afraid to go to Christ—they feel too unworthy, they are not good enough. Others [say they] may have hope and peace and joy, but with me all is darkness and doubt and fear. In the words of the hymn:

I hear, but seem to hear in vain,  
Insensible as steel;  
If aught is felt, 't is only pain  
To find I cannot feel.

' Now with these persons the great difficulty is that they endeavor to justify themselves and to become righteous before they go to Christ. . . . Instead of sewing up fig-leaves to make to themselves garments, they must go naked to Christ and be clothed of him in the robes of righteousness. . . . [They] will never go to Christ if they wait till they become fit, worthy, good enough,—if they hope to find in themselves any reasons by which they may think themselves entitled to claim the mercy of God. . . . They must give themselves up unconditionally to God in Jesus Christ,

with a full consciousness of being altogether unworthy. . . . In this way the painful conflict in their breasts will be terminated, the burden of guilt will be removed; . . . the dark clouds will be dispersed from their spiritual horizon and hope and peace and comfort will be felt in their souls.

'3. [Others] overlook one of the great objects of gospel revelation, which was to certify us of God's good will to men. These think they are to determine whether God is willing to have mercy upon them by some strange unnatural feeling, by some peculiar manifestation, by some extraordinary impression upon their minds, by some special inward revelation of God's grace and pardon. They say they do believe—but yet with them all is darkness and doubt and fear. No light of hope cheers their dreary prospects, no voice of mercy greets their anxious ears, no evidence from on high has been received that their sins have been forgiven.

'The difficulty with these persons is this: they disregard the settled testimony of God's word and institutions, the plain simple purpose of the gospel revelation, and look for an extraneous evidence which is vague and indefinite,—an evidence which can be subjected to no fixed rules of examination but which depends on frames and feelings, upon impulses and fancies. . . . Now if it is by our frames and feelings alone that we are to determine God's purposes towards us—if it is yet to be left to . . . individual illumination to determine the momentous question of God's willingness to save sinners, then indeed the gospel was given in vain. . . . If it is to be left to our feelings and impulses to ascertain our adoption and acceptance, how are we to distinguish the true from the false, the workings of the Spirit from the conceits of imagination? . . . If there is no definite standard by which these feelings are to be tried,

then all this boasted assurance, derived alone from this source, is but a blind leap in the dark. Brethren, the great question . . . is too momentous to be left to any frames or feelings of mortals. It was the express object of the gospel revelation to certify us of God's willingness to save sinners,—it is now our duty and privilege to be guided by the gospel as a sure and infallible standard.

'4. Some persons are filled with doubts and fears because of an injudicious comparison of their own religious exercises with the exercises of others. They see others strong in the faith, cheerful and happy in the enjoyment of religious comforts, apparently growing in grace and in the knowledge of Christ, while they themselves are weak and feeble, full of fears, and groaning under a burden of sin and corruption. They therefore become discouraged, they sink down in despondency, and oftentimes conclude that they know nothing of religion.

'They should remember that all have their trials and difficulties, their doubts and fears, their temptations and besetting sins, their days of darkness and desertion, . . . and that though they find in their hearts so much sin and corruption and think that surely none can be so unworthy as they, yet that all have to complain of the plague of their hearts and to confess and bewail their infirmities and sinfulness in the sight of heaven. . . . They must look to Jesus Christ; from first to last they must go as sinners to the cross of Christ . . . and rest upon no merits or works of their own but altogether upon God's mercy.

'5. The great importance of the interest at stake has a natural tendency to produce, in some, agitation, fearfulness and alarm. Some persons from constitutional temperament are prone to look on the dark and unfavorable side of ob-

jects ; they are predisposed to melancholy forebodings and seek morbid gratification in creating and cherishing a crowd of imaginary fears and evils. When persons of this tendency become interested in the momentous truths of religion and find in themselves, after all their efforts, so much sin, they very naturally give way to sadness and melancholy and ask if it is possible that such as they can be Christians. They think that they must be strangers to the converting and sanctifying power of grace. . . . The startling question will sometimes press itself into notice, What if they should be deceived? What if after all their profession of religion before men they should at last become castaways from the presence of God and instead of gaining the joys of heaven should be sentenced to endure the torments of hell?

‘ Now to such we would say that those who have the deepest religious feelings are sometimes most doubtful of their religious attainments ; that where there is most grace there is commonly the most humility ; that a weak faith may be as sincere and saving as a strong one ; . . . that those who have the least confidence and make the least pretensions are oftentimes the most faithful in duty and the most persevering in well-doing. . . . It should be remembered too that the Christian’s life here below is a state of warfare, and that no soldier can reasonably expect always to enjoy ease and comfort. . . . Though the way may be rough and the prospect may be dark and their spirits may be sad, yet let them hold on to the promise and all will come right at last ; the hills will recede and the way will become more smooth ; the fury of the storm will be hushed, the clouds will disperse, the birds will resume their songs, the fields will look green and gay and the sun, which had been so long concealed or faintly seen at intervals, will shine forth

in full-orbed glory and sink to rest without a cloud or speck to dim his disk.

‘In conclusion we would remark that the best remedy for all these doubts and fears is humble prayer to God. . . . Faith is the gift of God, and we should therefore pray to him to bestow upon us that most precious gift. . . . And we have every encouragement to pray, for God has promised to hear when we call and to give when we ask. . . . Let us then day by day lift up our hearts to God; let us pour out to him the wants and sorrows of our souls; . . . and we shall find to our comfort that our hearts, so long contracted by doubts and fears, will be relaxed and softened; the affections of our souls will flow out and fasten themselves upon the Saviour; the painful conflict in our bosoms will be terminated; and the blessed peace of God which passeth all understanding will take the place of guilty and accusing fears.’

In these accents we catch distinctly echoes of the preacher’s past experience; the verification of these ills in his own life at one period made him ever after a wise physician of the soul.

A noteworthy instance of immediate answer to prayer during his pastorate at Petersburg is attested, beyond the possibility of incredulity, by competent and faithful witnesses. A young girl was dying of brain-fever; her expression of countenance, her straining eyes, her incoherent talk were painful to see and hear. Her poor mother, having exhausted all human aid, groaned out in anguish of mind as her pastor entered to pay his regular visit, ‘Oh, if she could only speak to me once more it wouldn’t be so hard to let her go!’ Cobbs’ sympathies were profoundly stirred: ‘Let us go into an adjoining room,’ he said, and there, both

kneeling down, he put up a prevailing prayer to God that the longing of that mother's heart might be fulfilled. They returned to the sick-room: the dying girl's face had resumed its natural expression, the light of sense shone in her eyes. 'Mother,' she murmured in natural tones, 'I am not afraid to die,'—trying feebly meanwhile to draw from her finger a ring which she said she wished to give to a favorite sister. The revulsion of feeling was almost too much for the mother to bear.

When in 1841 it was proposed in General Convention to consecrate a bishop for Texas, Cobbs' name was seriously brought forward: proving that at last he had become known beyond the boundaries of his diocese. To his great relief the project fell through, owing to failure of concurrence on the part of the house of deputies, solely on the ground of lack of jurisdiction, Texas being still an independent state.

He was now a marked man, and when upon the death of Bishop Moore his successor required an assistant, Cobbs was the candidate of the laity but, well aware that he had not Bishop Meade's confidence, he made known through his friend Atkinson his particular desire that his name should not be used. This incident would strike the unenlightened reader with astonishment; painful though it be, it must be fully explained and illustrated: history requires that the truth of the matter should be told.

The evangelical movement was entering its second generation, was progressing into a new stage. Its heroic period was over, its ascendancy absolute, latitudinarianism was extinct. According to an inevitable law, the school, or movement, was now crystallizing into a party, exclusive, intolerant, denunciatory; it had its shibboleths, its party organ. The process was hastened by external pressure—

the rise of a new and antithetic school. In 1839 the alarm was sounded in convention at Norfolk over the approach of the 'enemy,' the 'heresy' and 'poison' of the Oxford tracts, the 'novel doctrines' of 'restless and speculative men.' At Alexandria, in 1841, the committee on the state of the church reported that though 'the spirit of error and popery' had been permitted by God, as a punishment, to array itself against the church, Virginia had yet been graciously spared the infection of the plague, and the dangerous tendency of Oxfordism had become so patent that even the ignorant were not likely to be caught in its snare. Since those without 'stand ready to reproach us with secret leanings towards popery,' the report continued, it is 'due to the cause of Protestant truth and real godliness to say distinctly that the church in Virginia disclaims all sympathy with the Oxford tract system and denounces it as containing some of the worst doctrinal errors of popery. We are obviously called upon . . . to make ourselves more fully acquainted with the hydra heresies, superstitions and abominations of that corrupt church from which we have been happily delivered, and with whose worse than "beggarly elements" some who call themselves Protestants have recently become so much enamored.' The report was approved 'by a very large majority.' At Staunton, in 1842, Bishop Meade returned to the charge, inveighing against the 'heretical opinions and Romanistic tendencies' of the new school, and its extravagant view of sacerdotal authority. 'Thousands of martyrs,' he said, 'died the most cruel deaths rather than for a moment assent to doctrines and practices of the Church of Rome which some would now have us believe differ little from our own.' He deplored the suspicion re-awakened by the new movement of an affinity between that



church and ours, whereas of late there had been a growing conviction that the line between the churches of England and Rome was 'so broad and deep that fellowship was impossible.' William Sparrow, the new professor of divinity at the Alexandria Seminary, thought that 'Tractism' materialized religion, to the dishonor of God's word; 'Evangelical and high-church principles do not agree,' he wrote; 'a man cannot hold Apostolical [or, as he branded it, 'digital'] succession and Protestant principles.'

With such indiscriminating condemnation, with the spirit and mode of expression of these utterances, Cobbs and a few like him found it impossible to sympathize, and were in consequence regarded with suspicion by the dominant majority. For now, narrowed by such unreasoning reaction, the evangelical movement degenerated into the low-church party. The genial missionary zeal of former time hardened into grim dogma,—that of the unconditional damnation of the heathen. The ictus was made to fall upon the article of conscious conversion, and there was much fraternizing with sectarians. Every reaction has its compensations; we note with satisfaction and a degree of surprise that in so short a time, comparatively, the old, bitter sectarian hatreds of the days of disestablishment had been mollified if not actually extinguished. It is a pity that that desirable consummation could not be attained without disparagement of apostolic order. For there was a disposition to regard episcopacy as an accident, expedient to preserve, no doubt, and historically justifiable, but by no means essential to the being of the church. Emphasis upon the grace of orders was stigmatized as 'sacerdotalism.' The sacraments were forms to which grace could not be 'tied'; belief that they did effect something was 'superstition.' Baptism was an

ordinance of the Lord, but 'regeneration' was not to be falsely associated with it; the eucharist was a commemorative ceremony. Informal prayer-meetings were greatly favored; stress was laid on sermons as working conversion, —but the liturgy could be altered or abbreviated at will: strict adhesion to the rubrics was stigmatized as 'formalism.' 'To save a soul,' it was fondly reiterated, 'is more than rubrics and canons,'—but how salvation was forwarded by breaking them was not made clear. Vestments, if not 'rags of popery,' were mere toggery. It is noteworthy that Bishop Moore had repeatedly to plead for the surplice and for conformity to rubrics. It may be questioned whether, if about the time he actually left it that good man had been just coming on the scene, it would not have seemed strange to him. There reigned a truly superstitious dread of ritual, as if there actually was some sorcery about it,—and charity failed at mention of Rome: the abhorrence felt for that church resembled rabies. Personal piety tended to harden into the ungracious, narrowly prohibitory,—denunciation of card-playing, the dance, the theatre, was its shibboleth.

Somewhat of this aversion to the Romish system and to ritualism, somewhat of this Puritan piety, Cobbs undoubtedly shared, but through his study of the Anglican divines, above all, through his thorough assimilation of the prayer-book, the spirit of his religion was truly CATHOLIC. He accepted all the articles, the nineteenth to the twenty-ninth, the sacramental series, as well as the preceding, the anthropological. He was perhaps not quite up to the elevation of the Institution office; he accepted cordially the doctrine of apostolical succession, believing in 'a divine commission as well as a divine call,' and he wrote of 'the eucharist,'—but the term 'altar' was not wholly agreeable

to him. He believed in baptismal regeneration—that 'then the divine spark is kindled' which after requires constant feeding. There could be little sympathy between him and one who denied, as his bishop did, that grace was 'tied' to baptism any more than to ordination! Cobbs was filled with the churchly and liturgical idea; he was loyal; he heartily loved the service and found it no hardship but a help to obey the rubrics. He was well disposed to those not of his communion—but he used to say, 'Nothing so promotes peace between neighbors as a good fence.' He was convinced that the Oxford movement, all things being considered, was doing more good than harm; he did not subscribe to all the tracts by any means, but he sympathized with the movement as a whole, believing that its insistence upon ecclesiological principles was greatly needed. He abhorred party strife, most of all within the church; he never used the terms 'high' and 'low,'—was never known to apply a party epithet to a brother. The very symmetry of his character exposed him to misconstruction by one-sided natures; because he loved the church they suspected his evangelical sincerity. These doubts of his soundness in the faith hurt him, there is no denying it, acutely—but he held his peace, and such was his patience under misrepresentation, such the beautiful proportion of his gifts, that the absence of resentment, of any salient idiosyncrasy, caused suspicion of his strength of character among uncongenial minds. They knew not his steadfastness. And so it came to pass that this simple, affectionate, humble and holy man of God felt out of place in his own Virginia and, sharp as was the wrench at last to his very heartstrings, grew reconciled to the thought of a change.

In 1843 he was deservedly honored with the doctor's

degree in divinity—Hobart College honoring itself by conferring it on him—and accepted a call to St. Paul's Church, Cincinnati. His parting sermon to his congregation at Petersburg was upon the text, 'Jesus wept,' and every heart was touched and every eye moist when in closing he begged his hearers' forgiveness if in the course of his pastorate he had, however inadvertently, injured any.

On leaving Virginia for a free state he freed his slaves, but they preferred to follow him.

The same year Thomas Atkinson left Virginia for Baltimore. Clearly, ecclesiastical leadership was departing from the diocese as political from the state. The year was also noteworthy for church progress, bearing upon the course of our history, in other quarters, especially the publication of Bishop Otey's 'Three Sermons.' These 'fell like a bomb-shell among the denominations of the Southwest,' wrote Green, 'and started the church in Mississippi in the right direction.' They were without doubt the first important and characteristic production of the young southern church, and form a landmark in its history. They were apologetic in their nature, as the production of a missionary age is bound to be; their assertion of church principles while temperate was firm and clear. The first sermon treated of the unity of the church, recommending to the Campbellites the Apostles' Creed as a 'concise summary' of Scripture truth; the second was on the ministry, and while teaching that ordination confers distinct authority, and appealing to the sacraments as witnessing to the continuity of our orders, the charge of exclusiveness was shown to be equally valid against those who urge it most strongly, namely, the Presbyterians. The last in the series defended the doctrine of apostolical succession, the three orders, and their God-

derived authority to teach, baptize, discipline—remitting and retaining sins—and to do whatever else the Lord commanded.

Even Polk had testified that he found in the Oxford tracts nothing on the subject of apostolic succession that had not been written before. Something in the constitution of Polk's mind—his love of system and order—made the corporate idea and organization of the church natural and agreeable to him.

In 1843<sup>a</sup> Alexander Gregg became a candidate for orders. Elliott's was presumably the initial influence in that direction, for his father, though upright and benevolent, was, as in so many cases already noticed, not a religious man. At college Gregg had evinced exceptional strength of character, withstanding the common temptations of student life, stemming the current of popular opinion, casting his influence against the prevalent insubordination. After graduation he studied law, was admitted to the bar, and after a brief practice surrendered tempting prospects of worldly success for the service of Christ and his church. He was baptized and confirmed by Bishop Gadsden in St. David's Church, Cheraw, and straightway began his studies for the holy ministry. The step was a severe disappointment to his father, who had other ambitions for him, but he became reconciled to it in the course of time.

Cobbs meantime completed his short pastorate in Cincinnati. He could not long be left in a subordinate position; he was marked for a bishopric. We know how he shrank, by reason of his physical constitution, from extreme cold; the winter of 1843-'44 may have been severe in the Ohio valley,—may have convinced him that he could not stand the climate. Perhaps too he found the ecclesiastical tem-

perature frigid, and no improvement on that he had left: the bishop of Ohio had lately put forth a bulky and withering review of 'Oxford Divinity,' which in his opinion was 'little else than *popery restrained*,' while popery was the Antichrist—'that Man of Sin revealed in the Scriptures.' In the Tractarian train he looked to see confession and transubstantiation come, with half-communion, image-worship, purgatory and indulgences. Yet this truly great bishop spoke of Cobbs in no measured terms, as the following noble tribute witnesses. After alluding in his convention address to dimissory letters received, he broke into this eloquent strain: 'I must add, with a deep sense of our loss and of the great gain of another diocese, that the Rev. N. H. Cobbs, D.D., whom I have just before mentioned as having been received into this diocese from Virginia, has left us, after so short a connection with us, to take charge of the diocese of Alabama as its bishop, and is waiting his consecration at the ensuing General Convention.

'Greatly beloved and eminently valued in the diocese of Virginia, where he had long labored most profitably, I expected much of him in the important charge to which he removed in Cincinnati. I saw enough of him there during my spring visitation to know that he was the man for that field, and that if kept in it by the good providence of God the church in that very growing city would be greatly blessed. Though truly bereaved in his departure, I cannot but rejoice that by our loss the church in Alabama obtains such a bishop and our house of bishops such a brother.'

Unqualified praise this,—unwonted, and so all the more impressive, from the lips of Bishop McIlvaine.

Cobbs' name had been mooted by the clergy of Indiana,

desirous of completing their diocesan organization, and nothing but suspicion that he would decline the call prevented the assent of the laity. So it came about that Alabama secured the prize. He was elected by the convention that met at Greensboro in that state in May, 1844—and the unanimity of the election did much to determine his favorable decision.

On the 20th of October he was consecrated in old Christ Church, Philadelphia, by the presiding bishop, Philander Chase, assisted by Bishops Meade, McIlvaine, Doane and Otey.

### III

#### EPISCOPATE

THE house of bishops at the time when Cobbs entered it was largely composed of truly remarkable men,—men whose figures stand out more clearly as they fall into the perspective of history. Its late president, the saintly Griswold—whom of all the northern bishops Cobbs most closely resembled in disposition—had been succeeded by the indomitable Chase, the first example of a fresh and thoroughly American episcopal type,—now, of course, a veteran in the service. There were twenty-one other bishops. Of the Onderdonks, leaders of the high-church party, lately towering in their power and pride of place, one had just been smitten down and murky clouds were gathering about the fair fame of the other. The susceptible Ives was there, the ‘lion-hearted’ Doane—with no presentiment of the pitfall in his path,—the intrepid De Lancey, the versatile Hopkins,—and the high episcopal ranks had lately been reinforced by the fervent Whittingham. Then there were the evangelical stalwarts, Meade, McIlvaine and Eastburn; the apostle of the northwest, Jackson Kemper; and the great trio of southern bishops, Otey, Polk and Elliott,—Otey, the apostle of the southern church (he had lately returned from prodigious tours through



Alabama, Georgia, Florida, Mississippi, Arkansas and the Indian Territory)—a man of heroic mould, deep piety, true wisdom. The first and last of these properties might seem to have been embodied more conspicuously in the other two—in Polk the hero and Elliott the scholar of the southern church. And now the group was completed and became four-square by the accession of Cobbs, in whom peculiarly that other quality of saintliness was incarnated. Otey included them all in noble proportion, mental, moral and spiritual qualities, loftiness of character, sanctity of soul, enlightenment of mind—but they were flashed back with more vivid gleam, as from the facets of a prism, by his three compeers. And so they stand, a wondrous group, the apostle, the hero, the saint and the sage: one may look far to find their like. And in their hands, providentially, the future of the southern church reposed.

In November, immediately after his consecration, the new bishop visited the home of his youth in his beloved Virginia, and then occurred one of the most affecting incidents in his life: his aged father bowed his stiff neck to the yoke of the Saviour and received confirmation at his son's hands. It was a scene of a nature to excite heartfelt emotion among all that witnessed it.

Thereafter the bishop crossed the mountains to Cincinnati, made the necessary preparations for removal, and bade his congregation at St. Paul's farewell. The boat he took was wrecked near the confluence of the Ohio with the Mississippi; no lives were lost, and without waiting for the recovery of the goods on board, the passengers took the next boat down the river. In due time his books were forwarded to him,—decidedly the worse for their sojourn beneath the flood. From New Orleans the bishop and his

family kept on their way by water to Mobile, and before the end of the year were breathing the balmy airs of Alabama.

At the time of Cobbs' birth, and probably even as late as the year 1800, the number of hundreds of white inhabitants in the territory of Alabama, exclusive of Mobile, which was not actually within it, could almost have been counted on the fingers of one hand, but in the years immediately following the purchase of Louisiana immigrants began to pour in at a constantly accelerated rate. They settled, naturally, along the valleys of the rivers Tombigbee and Alabama, and grew exceedingly restive under the continued occupation of Mobile and consequent control of the estuary by a foreign power. The United States laid claim to the city and adjacent territory under the terms of the Louisiana purchase, but the Spaniards refused to admit the claim and persisted in keeping possession until in 1813 General Wilkinson took advantage of the exigency of the times to wrest the fort from them and secure for the excited dwellers along the watery avenues of commerce unimpeded access to the Gulf. Thenceforth for many years the growth of population and the prosperity of the region were uninterrupted and quite extraordinary. When in 1817 Mississippi became a state, Alabama was erected into a separate territory and the city of Montgomery was planned. Only two years after, the new territory was admitted into the Union as the twenty-second state. In 1826 its capital was located at Tuscaloosa, and there the state university was established in 1831.

The latter year was likewise marked by the organization of the diocese. When it opened, there were in the state only two clergymen of the church, one at Mobile and one

at Tuscaloosa. A convention was called, and Bishop Brownell of Connecticut, who had lately made a missionary tour of discovery in the southwest, was invited to take charge of the infant diocese. He visited it in the years 1835 and 1837, and thenceforth was relieved by Polk. Brownell took an unfeigned interest in the prosperity of the church in that distant field, one of his best bequests to it being the devoted young Seymour Lewis.

A few years before, Pope Leo XII had despatched a Frenchman named Michael Portier as the first Roman bishop of Mobile.

By the beginning of 1837 the financial bubble was distended to the bursting point. Words of to-day would be too tame to depict that era of wild speculation: we gladly fall back upon contemporary records—which prove beside how hard and sterile that field must have been for the Episcopal church.

Immigrants, chiefly from Virginia and the Carolinas, came streaming in: they filled the river-boats,—the roads across country and by the cane-brakes were dotted with the white tops of the wagons containing their goods, while alongside marched troops of slaves. For ‘marvellous accounts had gone forth of the fertility of those virgin lands, and the productions of the soil were commanding a price remunerating to slave labor as it had never been remunerated before.

‘The proportion of young men, as in all new countries, was great, and the proportion of wild young men was, unfortunately, still greater,’ and little wonder, when we consider the demoralizing effect of a ‘violent disruption of family ties, a sudden abandonment of the associations and influence of country and of home—of the restraints of old

authority and opinion,—a sudden plunge into the whirling vortex of a new and seething population in which the elements were curiously and variously mixed with free manners and not over-puritanic conversation.'

Of a specimen settlement near the Mississippi line we read: 'Gamblers, then a numerous class, included, the village boasted a population of some five hundred souls, about a third of whom were single gentlemen who had come out on the vague errand of seeking their fortune, or the more definite one of seeking somebody else's. . . . The condition of society may be imagined: vulgarity, ignorance, fussy and arrogant pretension, unmitigated rowdyism, bullying insolence, if they did not rule the hour seemed to wield unchecked dominion. The workings of these choice spirits were patent upon the face of society, and the modest, unobtrusive, retiring men of worth and character (for there were many, perhaps a large majority of such) were almost lost sight of in the hurly-burly of those strange and shifting scenes. . . . Nothing was settled. Chaos had come again, or rather, had never gone away. Order, Heaven's first law, seemed unwilling to remain where there was no other law to keep it company.'

Southwestward accordingly flocked the cormorants of the law, 'because magnificent accounts came from that sunny land of most cheering and exhilarating prospects of fussing, quarrelling, murdering, violation of contracts—in fine, of a flush tide of litigation in all of its departments, civil and criminal. It was extolled as a legal Utopia.'

Among the throngs of adventurers—froth on the crest of the turbid wave of civilization as it swept westward—appeared strange characters illustrating each of the deadly sins (and not a few that summed them all up in one), who

have been impaled by the pens of clever writers of the day and so preserved for the inspection of after generations. One by one they swim before our vision,—personifications of gluttony, 'chronic thirst,' inordinate abuse of tobacco, gambling and avarice, parasitic laziness, furious temper, sensitive pride. There was 'Cave Burton,' who never 'rose from a table satisfied though he often rose surfeited. . . . He reckoned every calamity by the standard of the stomach. If a man . . . lost his health, so much was discounted from life—that is, from good living: if he died, death had stopped his rations.' There was 'Ovid Bolus,' the fine-artist in lying, in 'promises to pay,'—for whose genius 'truth was too small, fact too dry and commonplace.' But he who o'ertopped all others, who had the good fortune to find in Johnson Hooper a biographer of true Chaucerian grain, in whose work he yet stalks across the stage, a veritable Quixote of dishonor—was the renowned 'Captain Simon Suggs of Tallapoosa,' whose career of cunning was the working out of 'his favorite aphorism: It is good to be shifty in a new country.'

It is interesting to know that Bishop Cobbs knew Hooper well, and often laughed heartily over his humorous masterpiece.

In that society 'religion was scarcely heard of except as furnishing the oaths and technics of profanity.' Picture the state of the exchequer of a foreign or diocesan missionary society in the neighborhood of old 'Cæsar Kasm,' under whose scornful gaze 'virtue herself looked like something sneaking and contemptible' and who was 'selfish to that extent that, if by giving up the nutmeg on his noon glass of toddy he could have Christianized the Burmese empire, millennium would never come for him.

'Public office represented, by its incumbents, the state of public morals. . . . Out of sixty-six receivers of public money in the new states, sixty-two were discovered to be defaulters. . . . And what a criminal docket! What country could boast more largely of its crimes? What more terrific murders? . . . And almost anything made out a case of self-defence: a threat, a quarrel, an insult, going armed (as almost all the wild fellows did), shooting from behind a corner or out of a store door, in front or from behind,—it was all self-defence! . . . And what magnificent operations in the land offices! Such superb forays on the treasuries, state and national! . . . And in INDIAN affairs,—the very mention is suggestive of the poetry of theft, the romance of larceny! Swindling Indians by the nation! Stealing their land by the township! Conducting the nation to the Mississippi river, stripping them to the flap, and bidding them God-speed as they went howling into the western wilderness to the friendly agency of some sheltering Suggs duly empowered to receive their coming annuities and back rations! What's Hounslow heath to this?'

Retribution came in the commercial panic of 1837 and the enforced 'stampede' of the worst characters: for a time the one question was as to 'the nearest and best route to Texas.' But deliverance was not to be bought so easily: the fantastic schemes, the reckless expenditure, the financial dissipation of years involved the wreck of state credit as well as that of individuals; by a miracle of financiering for which she cannot be too grateful Alabama was saved from Repudiation,—but Mississippi's credit was submerged.

It was that crisis and the monetary depression that followed that gave a quietus to Bishop Otey's project of a

literary and theological seminary for the southwestern dioceses. A diocesan school for girls which he had striven to establish in Tennessee had to be closed almost as soon as it was opened.

The social condition just sketched, while on the one hand to the amused spectator it appeared truly Chaucerian in its wealth of humor and genuine good nature, its crew of quaint characters, was yet on the other hand, religiously considered, nothing less than a relapse into heathenism. This may seem severe; it is susceptible of proof. Coarse vices, greed for money, monstrous selfishness,—these are the very definition of heathenism, and they were sufficiently common and pronounced to impress their character upon that unsettled society in the fourth decade of the nineteenth century. And unhappily such ebullitions of heathenism leave their lingering traces, which it takes decades, generations even to work out. Heathenism mitigated—or as some would say, not without justice, aggravated—by revivalism (some of the horrors of which formed one of the ‘adventures of Simon Suggs’: to that classic the curious may be referred for certain repulsive phenomena of a system whose essential, laudable motive was the rescue of souls from heathenism)—could one imagine a more forbidding environment for the Episcopal church—one in which it was less wanted and more needed? One fact we may affirm without hesitation or qualification,—that the life-work in such a society of a bishop like Nicholas Hamner Cobbs was of inestimable value merely from the point of view of the political economist and secular historian.

The worst, to be sure, was over before he arrived. The sober, industrious, honest and worthy citizens, who may admittedly have been in the majority even during the car-

nival of speculation, when it was abruptly ended emerged into prominence and took the reins into their hands. A very few years then sufficed to work magical transformations in the outward aspect of things: 'the rude settlement' became 'the improved neighborhood, with its school-houses and churches; the log cabin' gave place 'to the mansion' (often with imposing, columnar portico),—'the wilderness, to the garden and the farm.' The best cotton lands were speedily converted into broad plantations. A deleterious consequence attended the rapid and ruthless destruction of mighty forests: the sunbeams playing for the first time upon the freshly cleared soil engendered a plague of malaria. The social life of the new epoch, as is the rule in young societies, was hearty and hospitable, but hardly more favorable to literature than that it superseded. Pleasures that perish in the enjoyment were the pastime of all classes and ages,—for gentlemen, the deer- and fox-hunt and the horse-race,—for ladies, the drive, the social call and the dance. The all-absorbing and exciting theme was politics; the most characteristic institution of the period a composite entertainment the occasion of which was political discussion. A rude platform would be constructed under the shade of a spreading tree; champions of the Whig and Democratic creeds would be brought together upon it; folk would come from far and wide to enjoy their feats and flights of oratory, in the intervals of which a band would play, while refreshment was provided by a monster barbecue. A horse-race would commonly be an additional attraction,—and the company experienced a sense of incompleteness if the debate and the day did not wind up with a duel.

The 'miserable passions of the hustings' awoke the ire of at least one aspirant toward the ideal, one of the first



graduates of the University of Alabama, and the literary glory and shame of his state in the generation before the war,—Alexander Beaufort Meek of Tuscaloosa, and later, of Mobile. Meek labored zealously—like his correspondent, William Gilmore Simms—to build up a local literature: ‘I am anxious,’ he wrote to Simms, ‘for the [Southern Quarterly] Review to go ahead as a southern organ—as a reflex of southern mind, feeling and spirit. . . . I am convinced we cannot have home independence of any kind—in commerce, manufactures, politics or what not, until we have a home independence of Mind. This is the end at which the great southern reformation should begin.’ But, he bewails, ‘hereabouts our mental atmosphere, like the interior of a gin-room, is impregnated almost entirely with cotton.’

Some forcible utterances that have by no means lost their point occur in an oration of his with the quaint title ‘Jack Cadeism and the Fine Arts,’ which was delivered before the literary societies of La Grange College in the year 1841. He deploras the mercantile spirit of the age, so antagonistic to literature and art,—the ‘foul incubus’ of materialism. It is an ‘age of utility,’ of physical as against intellectual greatness. The southwest is engrossed in monetary concerns. Even college-educated youth become immersed in money-getting to the neglect of letters. As for ‘southern literature!’—it is non-existent, save for Gilmore Simms: periodical ventures, all attempts fail; there is general contempt for ideal interests. He concludes by advocating state encouragement of the fine arts by the erection of public buildings of true architectural quality which should be adorned with statues and paintings.

In the prosecution of his meritorious ambition to create

a distinctive, native literature, Meek attempted various kinds of composition, especially poetry and history; in the latter dealing with romantic passages in the early annals of the southwest,—in the former, of luxuriant, truly Moore-ish sentiment, fancy and verse-flow, treating chiefly of love, with occasional bacchanalian strains, and glowing descriptions of southern landscape, with its reaches of sunny water, its rich perfumes and bright-feathered songsters.

It is apparent that culture had then and there a like struggle for existence with true religion against their common foes, materialism and fanaticism. The relation is profound; genuine culture refines, subtilizes and prepares the mind for religious impressions, while religion opens the soul to ideas of beauty. And it is an open secret that the Episcopal church in particular nourishes and seems in its extension to require a considerable degree of culture: hence the vital importance of education in its view.

If now we put ourselves the practical and engrossing question which the subject of our memoir must often have pondered: What is the explanation of the backwardness of the church in the southern states?—we may find on reflection that it has been answered in the last few pages. One who attentively considers it must be struck by the fact that the century was a third gone before there were bishops west of the Alleghanies and south of the Ohio, and that the states for which they were consecrated—Kentucky and Tennessee—were of forty years' standing. Seven more years had to elapse before there was a diocesan bishop in the vast tract of country, equal in area to western Europe, west of the Savannah river and south of the Tennessee line—in the Gulf states, that is, with Georgia and Arkansas. Then, in 1841, Bishop Polk, resigning his missionary juris-

diction, became diocesan of Louisiana, and Stephen Elliott was consecrated for the bishopric of Georgia, at the call of seven clergymen, with whom eight laymen concurred—and these formed, we are told, much the largest convention held since the organization of the diocese! Alabama had to wait three more years, and for years after that the great states of Florida, Mississippi, Arkansas and Texas remained missionary jurisdictions. In fact, the church in that whole section was not fully organized until the century was more than half gone,—until the very eve of the civil war.

Many reasons may be alleged for this backwardness which in a comprehensive view seem sufficient to account for it. They may be distributed for convenience' sake into external and internal, and under the former head geographical, social, temperamental and religious causes may be summarized. It seems as if the time had come for such an analysis, that we may see clearly where and how we stand.

In the first place, then, the most patent and striking explanation, doubtless, is the geographical, both physical and political: the enormous extent of the territory under review, the lack of facilities of travel (the system of railroad communication between the Atlantic and the Mississippi was established only a few years before the war), and the lack of centres of population. But these physical considerations are utterly inadequate, for they bore equally upon all denominations, and Baptist and Methodist exhorters, in spite of them, had early penetrated everywhere. The absence of flourishing centres of industrial and literary activity is more noteworthy, for it is indubitable that a civic atmosphere, with its constituent culture, is congenial to the church,—and the absence of such was signal in that time; in the

whole vast region there was only one city that could be called great, and there in fact and in the smaller centres, Savannah and Mobile, the church did earliest take vigorous root. At the date of Bishop Elliott's consecration more than half the strength of his diocese was concentrated in Savannah.

So transition is effected to the social causes, which were of weight. The bishops constantly had occasion to complain not only of the scattered condition of the population but even more of its continual change: it was restlessly, ceaselessly shifting, here to-day and gone to-morrow. Its nature must be considered, composed so largely of young adventurers with no ties to bind them to past or future, existing in consequence in the present, the visible and the tangible,—what care had they for the unseen and eternal,—what sense of the need of salvation? Old people and children were relatively few in those raw communities; there was scant respect for age, for ancient institutions. We may instance 'Sam Hele,' who 'had no respect for old things, and not much for old persons; established institutions he looked into as familiarly as into a horse's mouth, and with about as much respect for their age.' In him the faculty of veneration was absolutely wanting, and 'he believed that everything marvellous was a lie.' How could not the church only, with her stable, conservative genius, but Christianity in any form, or religion itself, with its supernatural claims, find any foothold in such neighborhoods?

The wide-spread lack of education must be considered, and most of all the rampant materialism, the unmitigated secularism of which a single entry in Otey's journal affords a mental photograph: 'Rode to Memphis. The town was

filled with Indians and the people too busily engaged in traffic to think of their spiritual interests.' Let us adduce further testimony from the bishop's writings; it will appear conclusively that we are not painting the shadows too dark.

'In a vast majority of instances the young who are just rising into manhood are totally ignorant of the nature and extent of their obligations as moral and accountable beings. They can give shrewd and intelligent answers to all questions concerning traffic and trade and the value of various kinds of property, but as to [their religious] obligations . . . they have been taught nothing, they know nothing, and oftentimes care nothing. The example of their parents has led them to regard money as the chief good, and in its acquisition all advantages are to be taken which the law will allow, or which artful evasions of the law will enable them to compass. The social affections are swept away in this struggle for gain—there is no place for their exercise, and the kindly offices of charity and benevolence are unknown. The children of the country are thus in a measure trained up with feelings almost hostile to their species. The idea they have of public liberty is that they may do as they please, regardless of the comfort and even the rights of others. Reverence for age and character is unfelt, sympathy for suffering and distress is destroyed, and respect for law and authority despised as meanness. Effrontery is taken for manliness, rudeness for gentility, and impudence for easiness of manners.'

This extract alone would be sufficient to explain the bishop's zeal for church schools.

'The duties of life are so numerous, so frequent in their recurrence, so engrossing in their character and so worldly in their complexion that it is not surprising that men refer

them to principles more in accordance with their carnal notions than is consistent with the spirituality of the gospel. Under a persuasion that its preaching is designed to bear almost exclusively upon questions about our spiritual nature and that its duties are wholly disconnected from the ordinary concerns of life, it is no wonder that they manifest a reluctance to come under its influence. In addition, the infidelity that is abroad will persuade men that Christianity will interfere not only with their enjoyments but with their rights, and abridge their liberty to an unreasonable extent. Hence the indisposition manifested by many to contribute any aid towards the erection of places of worship, and the reluctance with which they give a modicum for the decent support of the ministry. There are those, and it is humiliating to the feelings with which we cherish the honor of the state to mention the fact, there are those who will spend hundreds of dollars in an electioneering canvass and yet begrudge the pitiful sum of five dollars to keep up the preaching of the gospel for a whole year! Hence too, in combination with the causes before mentioned, that neglect of public worship so manifest in our country.'

Yet another sentence throws light upon the religious philosophy of affliction: 'Here, as in many other parts of our country, the number and greatness of temporal blessings appear to superinduce an indifference to religious privileges.'

To sum up; in the case of the majority an absorbing struggle for subsistence, and in that of a large minority, after the satisfaction of physical needs, the waste of superfluous means and energies in frivolous indulgence—the ambition just to have 'a good time'—such is a picture of the hard conditions, the practical paganism with which the

church and all ideal interests as well have had to contend from the beginning and will have to until the millennium.

When we come to the religious reasons for the church's retardation we encounter that impalpable, pervasive universalism, that genial, boyish American optimism at which one can hardly have the heart to grow indignant—that conviction that everything is coming out right in the end, that we are all going to the same place—and that, of course, heaven; that differences of creed and ceremonial are of no importance, for all if sincerely held are equally pleasing to God—and that after all, an honest, benevolent heart is the essential thing and amply sufficient for salvation.

This species of religious epicureanism, which of course terminates logically in no religion, was widely prevalent from about 1840 on.

The nature of the popular religion throughout the whole section was a grave, perhaps the gravest obstacle, characterized as it was by an emotionality repugnant to the church's system. The ground was periodically seared and parched by the prairie-fires of revivalism, and hence became so indurated that the church could make scarce any impression upon it. The most stubborn soil of all—perhaps in the whole country—was that of Tennessee.

A revival would subside, leaving in the community a jaded religious appetite that awaited the stimulus of fresh excitement. Thus were engendered alternations of satiety, morbid craving and emotional paroxysm—the latter proving highly detrimental and often fatal to struggling missions of the church. What wonder that to such sensationalism the church's sober ways seemed 'formal'?

That was the grand charge brought against her by popular religionism. Because she did not minister to religious

intoxication she was condemned as having the form but not the power of godliness. It is hard for one always accustomed to her mode of worship to realize the impression it would make on a raw novice: to such a one, for example, the surplice seemed excessively queer (some ridiculed it as a night-dress), and the responses were a marvellous sort of hocus-pocus. This was pointedly expressed, and the grade of culture he had to cope with is revealed, by a proposition concerning Otey and his wife (often the only respondent at service) overheard in Tennessee: 'Come, let's go hear that man preach and his wife jaw back at him!'

A political reason that must by no means be omitted was the individualism—designated as 'sturdy' or 'arrant,' as 'independence' or 'insubordination,' according to one's prepossession,—the jealousy of personal control that was fostered by the states'-rights principle and was indisputably hostile to the organic character of the catholic church.

Associated with this is the interesting and memorable fact that the Episcopal was the slaveholders' church,—that it was in fact the church of a class. This followed, it will be observed, from much that has been said, and had in turn important consequences. The centrifugal, manorial idea and principle of settlement was early imported into Virginia and was transplanted by emigrants thence over the cotton states. The stately mansions, separated from each other by leagues of plantation, harbored a high degree of refinement, of literary and religious culture; according to ancient precedent, chapels of ease would sometimes be erected near them, and service would be read and the young people taught by a clerical tutor. But this state of things, attractive as some of its aspects undoubtedly were, was not conducive to missionary zeal, to an apprehension of the church



in her catholicity both of priesthood and worship. And so we find that we have entered the field of internal causes.

These may be deduced from the last paragraph. They were chiefly two—lack of missionary spirit and jealousy of priestly and episcopal prerogative. The latter was traditional in the southern church,—our thought is carried back to the long and almost unanimous opposition to the introduction of the episcopate in provincial Virginia, and to its late postponement and practical fettering at first in the states of North and South Carolina respectively. There was deep-settled suspicion of anything that looked like centralization, prerogative, episcopal authority. Low-churchmanship in ecclesiastical was the exact homologue of the states'-rights view in civil polity. 'The question of the ordinal, "Will you reverently obey your Bishop?" was distasteful to republican ears. . . . There grew up the theory that the bishop has no rights of fatherhood inherent in his high commission but is the mere creature of the canon. . . . In the fear of episcopal despotism, the office was in danger of being robbed of all its efficiency.'

Connected with this was a tendency to diocesan isolation and absorption of interest in diocesan or even parochial enterprise, fatal to all enlarged views and enterprises and, in the weak and struggling condition of the dioceses, to steady and healthy progress. It had to be overcome by a social, centripetal tendency,—and the union of the southern dioceses in one great interest was the supreme crisis, the commanding event in their history.

The most serious and also the best substantiated charge is that of lack of the spirit of sacrifice for the cause of missions. Hence the terrible problem that weighed upon all the bishops, wrung from them repeatedly the most

pathetic appeals, and shortened their days—the problem of clerical support. People were not willing to give freely of their superfluity, or better, only a tenth part of their necessities for the support of the gospel. There was mournful lack of the spirit of self-denial, and consequent preclusion of the plenteous reward that follows cheerful and generous giving. Had there been the effective system of diocesan missions that there might have been, we should have a very different story to tell. But what was demanded by the situation, the territory, and the time, was a revival of the old order of itinerant evangelists—the due employment of the talent of those (and there were plenty of them) who were born to lay foundations and pass on. Nothing was as necessary—and nothing so hopelessly out of the question.

Finally, that emotional characteristic before touched on operated detrimentally to many enterprises. Bishop Otey is our chief witness to the transient enthusiasm that began church-building and the fatal lack of perseverance that resulted in failure to finish what had been so hopefully begun. That was the melancholy history of many promising undertakings,—lack of consecutive, persistent effort,—enthusiasm that flashed in the pan, leaving a disheartening load of debt.

We have finished our survey of the reasons for the backwardness of the church in the southern states,—for the backwardness, be it noted: there was progress, and so of course there were zeal, high aspiration, persevering self-sacrifice, loyal devotion to the episcopal office. It would be an illicit inference that the above was the total impression left by its history. Far from it; the reasons for its growth and progress will appear in the sequel. But the

grace of God was not lacking, and the somewhat exhaustive review just completed serves to explain why its operation was not full and free. Such a survey is absolutely necessary to a due appreciation of the work of our bishop and his heroic compeers—pioneers of the church in the south. It unfolds their environment; the discouragements and difficulties they had to overcome; and the real magnitude of the work they accomplished.

Led by a sagacious instinct, Bishop Cobbs took up his residence at Tuscaloosa, the state capital and seat of the university—on whose staff of professors Frederic A. P. Barnard was then serving. The bishop's family was large, consisting of nine sons and daughters, and a tenth child was born to him after his settlement in Alabama. His diocese numbered four hundred and fifty communicants, scattered among fifteen parishes, and about fifteen clergy, including teachers and missionaries. The only railroad in the state ran from Montgomery to the Georgia line; his chief dependence on his visitations was therefore the boats that plied on the Alabama and Tombigbee rivers, and after those the stage-coach lines and his own gig. He started out with the heroic determination to break bread in every church household in the state, and it is believed that he succeeded or very nearly succeeded in so doing before he died. No reflection is intended upon the hospitality with which he was entertained—but his success, together with steamboat fare, etc. (steamboat coffee and hot bread!), did not tend to relieve the dyspepsia to which he was a martyr.

One of the earliest entries in his journal (January, 1845) is the following: 'It is my intention to pay special attention to the slave population in the diocese and thus to remove, if possible, one of the grounds of objection to the

Episcopal church.' In his first address to his convention he spoke of the pressing need of clergy, and regretted that there was only one candidate for orders in the diocese. This was a string on which from first to last his fellow-bishops harped, Leonidas Polk as loudly as any: 'We must,' said he, 'for many reasons raise up clergy from among ourselves, either from those who have come to make their homes among us or from natives of the soil'; and again, 'The chief difficulty in the spread of the gospel among us arises from the want of laborers adapted by their knowledge of the usages of our social condition and their habituation and inclination to labor effectually in the southern diocese'; and later, 'A native ministry is imperative. The supply is far short of the demand.' In consecutive convention addresses Bishop Otey said: 'In such times as these, ministers and parents should bring fairly and frequently before the consideration of the pious young men of the church, the duty of consecrating themselves to the service of God in the ministry of his church. . . . Herein consists the great obstacle to our progress—the want of active and diligent laborers to cultivate the fields which appear to promise so rich a return. . . . Vacant parishes and unoccupied stations, whence the cry for help reaches us in urgent and earnest appeals, are stronger arguments than any reasonings which I could employ to move us all to united and vigorous exertion for . . . the education and preparation of a native and efficient ministry to labor in the cause of Christ and the church in the Southwest.' And years later Bishop Rutledge declared: 'The smallness of the number of candidates in proportion to the need there is for them in every part of our wide-spread country is one of the signs of the times calling for the deepest concern of every friend of re-

ligion and of the church. All proper steps should be taken by the clergy to induce young men of ability and piety to desire this calling.' 'Oftentimes,' said Cobbs, 'those that would be the most useful in the ministry are timid and retiring, and need a word of encouragement to draw them out.' He urged, on the same occasion, the establishment of a school wherein 'education should be connected with religion according to the doctrines and worship of the church.'

So he began, the chief of missionaries in the diocese, and his clergy's counsellor and friend. His influence may be characterized as cohesive and constructive; he was to his clergy as a father to a band of brothers; he early won their confidence, which deeper knowledge riveted. Transparently guileless, he had exquisite tact in putting things so as not to give offence. He was considerate; he never found fault with his clergy in others' presence but would await occasion to speak to a delinquent privately. In cases that he recognized as matters of opinion he would express his view but felt no resentment if it were not adopted. He continued on a larger scale the pastoral practice of his early years; in cars and stages and on steamboats he lost no opportunity of spiritual good, and his dealing with all varieties of character was inimitable. So soul by soul, as a bishop may, he built up his diocese, as stone by stone angels reared the tower of Hermas's vision.

In his convention address of 1846 he referred to some familiar, long-standing obstacles to the progress of the church: 'There is much to discourage us, from the scattered condition of the population' in the diocese, and the difficulty of obtaining clergy, but 'the great difficulty with which we have to contend is the distrust that pervades the

community as to the evangelical and spiritual character of the church—a greater barrier to her growth than any objection to our ecclesiastical polity or to our liturgical worship.’ Then followed an example of success, grounded on his own practice: ‘In Montgomery there had been much religious excitement, with which all the different congregations more or less sympathized. To meet this state of things and to keep his congregation from being driven about by every wind of doctrine the rector very judiciously multiplied his services and diligently visited from house to house among his people. In this way he demonstrated that the church, without departing from any of her principles or rules, could furnish an adequate supply of food to the most stimulated appetite, and thus effectually obviated one of the popular objections against her forms and offices. By pursuing this course the rector was enabled to strengthen his communion and to establish his congregation on a permanent basis.’

At the same time a revival in Georgia proved disastrous to the struggling parish at Macon, as Bishop Elliott testified: ‘After two or three years of labor, everything was utterly prostrated under the effects of one of those whirlwinds of religious excitement which are brought to bear so systematically upon our efforts.’

‘Experience will always demonstrate,’ Cobbs continued, ‘that the services of the church are eminently suited to the wants and circumstances of the colored people. They embody the elementary instruction specially needed by that class of people and they seem by constant repetition to fasten truth upon the memory and conscience’; and then, speaking of hearing a lady catechize a class of young slaves: ‘it was impossible to hear their prompt answers and to

listen to their excellent singing and chanting without the liveliest sensibility.'

It is pertinent here to unfold the consensus of testimony concerning the religious instruction enjoyed by the slaves and their owners' sense of responsibility therefor, and thus silence once for all an unjust reproach. The bishops were conscientious in impressing this duty upon the masters, and repeatedly testify to their recognition of it, with the result (in the words of Bishop Elliott's biographer) of 'a larger number of civilized and Christianized people than have ever been directly reclaimed from the barbarian heathen since the early days of Christianity.' It may be that this great work absorbed all the missionary energy of the people. Bishop Polk inculcated, especially upon the laity, moral and religious obligations to the negroes, and when the alternative was offered him of an inheritance of money or slaves he chose the latter, in order that his interests might be identical with those of the planters of his diocese, and that he might exhibit among them his ideal of the relation of master and man. Elliott 'was earnestly devoted to the duty of preaching the gospel to the negroes of his diocese. He summoned his whole people to the work, as the great mission to which they were called, the special field of Christian labor to which they were dedicated. Some of his most eloquent and impassioned addresses were devoted to this theme. . . . He held his people to a strict responsibility for the spiritual and eternal, as well as the physical and temporal welfare of those over whom they ruled. He sent missionaries and established missions among the negroes wherever he could. He founded St. Stephen's Church for colored people in the city of Savannah, and placed its secular affairs under the charge of a colored vestry.' At-

kinson was 'always considerate of them, always anxious to secure for them adequate protection against abuse of authority, and to promote the patriarchal relation of master and servant which, when duly observed, made the tie of ownership and dependence very graceful.' And Bishop Davis defined this as 'a great field of missionary labor. We owe this people religious instruction. . . . Happily, . . . masters of slaves in South Carolina are solicitous for their religious instruction and improvement.' He and Green both testified to faithful training given them, notably by mistresses of plantations. In South Carolina the question of slaves' marriages was vexing. It was mooted in several conventional sessions, and the prevalent opinion ran that masters should not separate married slaves, and if they did so, would be responsible for the evils that should ensue.

Cobbs organized a colored congregation in Montgomery, and preached one of his best sermons—one of the few that he allowed to be printed—on the consideration due by masters to their slaves. It is entitled 'Naaman and the Hebrew Maid':

'From the whole tenor of the narrative we may reasonably infer that Naaman's wife was an amiable and tender-hearted woman, and that she was a humane and kind mistress to the captive maid who had been introduced into her family. . . . Kindness, even to the poorest and most humble, is never lost; a good deed never goes unrewarded. Besides the present happiness which we find in the mere performance of the act, kindness will ultimately be repaid, and that too with compound interest. It may not indeed flow back in a direct channel from the parties that have been obliged: they perchance may prove ungrateful; but it will come incidentally, collaterally, circuitously, remotely,



perhaps slowly, but yet most certainly and abundantly. . . . In general it will be found that the humble and dependent are more grateful for favors and more generous in their feelings than those who are prosperous and fortunate in the world ; for this latter class are very apt to be selfish, wilful and exacting in their feelings and purposes. How important it is, not only as a matter of Christian duty but of interest and personal comfort to be kind, obliging, considerate and condescending to the poor, to inferiors and to dependents ; to treat them with respect and with all due regard to their feelings and their rights. In this world of changes and chances none should presume to be independent of those around him ; the strong, the great, and the wealthy may often be so situated as to be dependent on the aid and the sympathy of the weakest and the lowest,—nay, like Naaman may be glad and thankful to listen to the timely suggestions of some little servant girl. . . . Let us be careful to value the respect, the prayers and benedictions of the poor and the dependent, for we can have no good reason to expect the blessing of God to rest upon our souls or upon our churches as long as we are indifferent to the wants and sufferings, the rights, the feelings and the interests of the poor.

‘ We all know how much the peace, comfort and happiness of a whole family depend on the tempers and deportment of domestics and dependents ; that in times of sickness and suffering especially the care and attention, the nursing and watching of faithful and devoted servants are of incalculable value ; that at such times they are our best and most reliable friends. . . . It is therefore a matter of prudence as well as duty to be kind and considerate to inferiors and domestics ; to be interested in their well-being ;

and to be ready and prompt to promote not only their temporal comfort but their spiritual welfare. Such a course of kindness and prudence in the exercise of authority and discipline, duly tempered with firmness and decision, though it may sometimes fail, will in general not only secure the fidelity of dependents and domestics, but will always insure the inward peace and comfort of superiors. There is scarce anything more at variance with the character of a Christian man, or more destructive of all domestic peace and happiness, or more subversive of all good order and government, than the spirit of constant fault-finding and bitterness; the habit of reproach and threatening towards those that are under us. Such a course is well calculated to discourage and repulse all the sentiments of respect, fidelity and gratitude, and to make those that are placed under us careless, hardened and unprincipled. . . . In general, the true character of the heart will be shown in the temper and conduct of persons towards dependents and inferiors. What a man may seem to be to those that are under him in his family, such most likely is his character as it appears in the sight of God.'

Early in 1847 the bishop had the pleasure of receiving into his diocese his young friend Henry Lay, a graduate of the University of Virginia and the Alexandria seminary, and now in deacon's orders. Lay admired, revered, and loved Bishop Cobbs above all men whom he ever met. About that time the diocese enjoyed another accession in Nathaniel Knapp. In fact, the bishop's corps of clergy justified the grateful pride he took in them.

In the summer, while on his way to General Convention, he visited his birthplace and his parishioners at Petersburg. 'The cordial and affectionate welcome,' he wrote, 'with

which I was everywhere greeted by those kind people with whom I had spent my childhood and youth and the better portion of my manhood, and who for years had attended upon my ministry, could not but be grateful to my feelings, and often brought to the eye the tear of gratitude and called from the heart a prayer for the blessing of heaven to rest upon those whose sensibilities and sympathies had not been blunted by time or distance.'

It is gratifying to note that on this journey he preached the ordination sermon, at Meade's request, before the graduating class at the seminary in Alexandria.

On his return from New York and the convention—the first that met after the perturbation caused by Newman's secession to the church of Rome—he was happy to reassure the troubled mind of his diocese as to the 'sound evangelical piety' of the American church.

At Otey's request he then made visitations in Mississippi and Florida.

Exciting scenes were transpiring meanwhile in the state; these were the years of the Mexican War, and the heated debates that ensued over the admission or prohibition of slavery in the territory thereby acquired. Alabama, and particularly Montgomery, whither the seat of government was removed in 1846, now became a veritable political storm centre, insomuch that the claim has been made, very plausibly, that that city was thenceforth the true seat and pivot of the slavery and secession propaganda and movement. Three famous conventions were held there in 1847-'48, at the last of which the radical southern opinion was definitely formulated, the compromising expedient of 'squatter sovereignty' was repudiated, and the constitutional right to carry slaves into any territory was asserted.

In drawing this conclusion William Lowndes Yancey was the moving spirit; and soon thereafter occurred his great debate with the Whig and Unionist, Henry Hilliard. The latter won in the campaign, and thus emerged into clear light the mediatorial function of the state; geographically Alabama is the bond between the southeast and the southwest, and her political character is accordingly determined; on this occasion she cast her weight with that of Georgia into the scale of compromise and thus, to Cobbs' delight, ensured ten more years of peace. The nomination in 1852 of the bellicose Troup and Quitman by the Southern Rights Association at Montgomery did not shake her pacific resolution.

The year 1849 was a busy one for Cobbs. The diocesan school that from the first he had had at heart opened with six pupils at Tuscaloosa. The enthusiasm, the longing of the four leading southern bishops for Christian education was positively pathetic. 'It is in the early implantation of religious principles in the minds of children,' wrote Otey in his journal, 'that the germ is laid for the development of future piety in the church.' And again, twenty years later: 'In a vast majority of the schools of the country the subject of religion has been virtually ignored. . . . The idea that children may well learn everything at school but the solemn duties which Christianity enjoins has a direct practical tendency to make them infidels, nay, atheists. . . . Must the lamentable result of a failure to teach the young to fear God be witnessed by each succeeding generation in the open profligacy and shameless impiety and daring crime of the adult population, before we can be roused to perceive the folly and danger of the system we have been pursuing?' Polk hoped that the Louisiana convention

would 'adopt some general plan of education' for the youth of the diocese: 'The mission of the church,' he urged, 'is that of a teacher. The education of our children should be in our own hands. Others may do it well,—we ought not to allow that they can do it better.' In former days Elliott 'yearned' to make of the South Carolina College 'a school of high learning, a rich source of truth and refinement, and a centre of generous intellectual citizenship to the state. "Will you let other states breed your scholars?" exclaimed he on one occasion to one of the classes.' On another occasion, after watching with a group of students the arrangement of books on the shelves of the new library, he turned and said: 'Now, young gentlemen, I will expect in after years each one of you who can afford it to bring some work of art, some statue, bust or picture to adorn these alcoves.' And 'in the earlier days of his episcopal administration, he sacrificed his private fortune and reduced himself to poverty and want, in his uncalculating efforts to establish an eminent school for female education at Montpelier, in the centre of his diocese.'

In his annual address Cobbs referred to familiar, grievous hindrances to the growth of the church,—one, 'the unsettled and changing state of the population,'—another, 'the inadequate support of the clergy.'

'Few can conceive the anguish of soul suffered by a modest minister when in the withholding of his little stipend he thinks he sees the evidence that his people care nothing for him, that he has forfeited their esteem and that his influence over them has been lost. The clergy are restrained by delicacy from pressing their just claims, and are yet of all men expected to be the most scrupulous and punctual in the payment of their debts.'

It is a grave question whether the voluntary system of the nineteenth century was an improvement over the ancient one of endowment. Bishop Otey frankly said that American churchmen and the American people were on trial: 'We are in the very midst of an experiment, perhaps the most important and interesting that can engage the thoughts and attention of the people of this country. It is to ascertain whether Christianity can be sustained by the unconstrained and voluntary support of the people. . . . The honor of religion as well as the honor of our beloved country is staked upon the experiment now being made of our willingness and of our ability to uphold the public worship of God. Every man therefore has in this subject a personal interest and an individual responsibility from which there is no escape.

'It is matter of profound regret, not to say mortification, that we have no funds provided in the diocese, with its immense resources, to aid aspirants to the holy office of the ministry in securing to themselves the advantages of theological training and associations at our schools of divinity. The number of those offering themselves for the clerical profession would encourage us to hope that God is indeed answering the prayers of his church— . . . but how is such a hope shaded in its brightness when we realize the little interest manifested by our people in this work, and how inadequate the means provided by them for the proper education and due preparation of the young men of the church for this holy and responsible calling!' And at the same time Rutledge made appeal: 'Let men of influence and wealth encourage this [effort for the increase of the ministry] by consecrating, as the Lord hath blessed and prospered them, a portion to facilitate a work which must redound to his honor and glory.'

'Of all human ills,' Polk wrote to McIlvaine, '*debt* to a clergyman is perhaps as grievous as any.' And he urged upon his convention repeatedly—in fact, this was a dominant note in his addresses—an increase in contributions for diocesan missions: 'means of supporting missionaries,' he averred, was the one thing wanting to a great advance, and 'no truer standard of the state of religious feeling in a community can be presented than that which is found in the measure of their contribution to the cause of missions.' Rutledge testified that 'thrilling appeals' had been lamentably neglected by the parishes of Florida. Lay wrote from Arkansas: 'For many years past my spirit has been weighed down by anxiety in behalf of the clergy and their families, so little have they to live on, and nothing to bequeath their families when they die.' And Otey swelled the plaintive chorus with a note of indignation: 'The remedy . . . is in the hands of our lay brethren, who are chiefly interested in providing for themselves and families the benefits and blessings of religious services. If they will provide food, raiment and lodging for the clergy, the efforts of their pastors can be more concentrated and, as all observation of the past shows, can be rendered far more effectual.

'It is lamentable to think how the instances multiply in which the church is deprived of the services of valuable men in consequence of impaired health. The physical energies which ought to be properly and rightfully employed in advancing the work of the gospel, are too often expended by ministers in sedentary occupations, made necessary to meet the wants of themselves and families; and this too happens not infrequently when a retrenchment in the mere superfluities of life would enable the people to relieve their spiritual pastors from want and maintain them in ease and

respectability. Broken health and premature old age are consequences following in the train of personal ills in this account, while the thoughts of anticipated poverty and its attendant anxieties, as the certain portion of wife and children, embitter life's moments and paralyze the last feeble exertions of many a faithful minister in the cause of truth, virtue, and religion. Such things, in the permissive providence of God, may try the faith of the ministry, but they may also be instrumental, in the dispensations of the same righteous providence, to punish more sorely and signally the unchristian neglect of a people!'

It seemed, moreover, that the expectations of a congregation—its exacting, critical spirit—increased in proportion to its parsimony.

'I want words to express the sense of mortification which I have felt from year to year at seeing the small amounts reported as contributions from the diocese of Tennessee to the missionary operations of the church. . . . Apathy and inaction have characterized several parishes in reference to this subject. It is known that we are poor and weak and cannot give much—but does it therefore follow that we should not give at all? . . . May not [this want of zeal] be owing to the fact that we have been so liberally dealt with by our church institutions out of the diocese, and thus have learned to rely on others rather than on ourselves? We care little for that which costs us little. May not this be the reason why . . . the great Head of the church withholds his blessing from us, and permits us to be afflicted with spiritual leanness?

'When I consider the ease with which large sums of money, even hundreds of thousands of dollars, are readily contributed for the construction of railroads, to provide



accommodations for stock and visitors at our annual fairs, to erect magnificent hotels, to build theatres, and to construct steamboats; when I hear of the thousands which are given to garnish sepulchres for the dead; when I witness the profuse expenditures upon mere objects of taste and instruments of luxury by professed Christians, I almost persuade myself that a liberal response will be made to this call.

‘It is certainly a matter of great importance to the interests of the church in this diocese that its episcopate should be endowed. . . . We have all seen the great inconvenience, trouble and difficulty, to say the least, encountered in the support of the episcopate by our present mode of annual assessments.’ This cry might have been wrung from him by dire necessity: the assessment for 1847-’48 was over a thousand dollars—of which the bishop received only a little over five hundred; another year his salary amounted to the princely sum of four hundred and fifty dollars. Elliott’s receipts were insignificant until his entire fortune was swallowed up in liquidating debts incurred in behalf of the institute at Montpelier—and then the diocese rallied to his support. Polk received no salary for years, and for long only a pittance, until at length his property was also swept away. Cholera and repeated visitations of yellow fever decimated his slaves; a tornado destroyed his sugar-house, cabins, and stables; the ensuing winter, frost nipped the cane; and to cap these hurrying disasters, a loan that he raised upon his property was lost by defalcation, and he was forced to sell his plantation. Then at last the diocese awoke to its obligations and pledged him an adequate salary.

From this review it appears conclusively that for the

sake of justice or mercy or both, for the honor of the church, the principle of endowment, at least to the extent of a living minimum, must be adopted again, to be reinforced by periodical offerings. The first point to secure, of course, would be diocesan endowment, then parochial—if only, in a feeble parish, an ‘endowment of the pulpit,’ or an assured sum sufficient for the living expenses of an unmarried minister,—and finally, scholarships for students of divinity. Certainly men and women of means could not possibly employ or bequeath them to worthier ends.

We have glanced long since at Cobbs’ relations with the sectarians by whom he was surrounded; his kindly policy remained unchanged and told with increasing effect upon the wider stage to which he was transferred. All that was evangelical in his spiritual nature revolted against the doctrinal, ceremonial, and hierarchical system of the church of Rome or any mimicry of it,—but he was kindness itself to her members. Bishop Portier was actively engaged in strengthening his communion by the usual institutional methods. He founded asylums for orphan boys and girls, introduced into Mobile the order of nuns of the Visitation, founded a cathedral school, and fostered Spring Hill College. It would be interesting to know what intercourse if any Cobbs had with him when visiting Mobile. To all that was catholic in Cobbs’ nature,—his humility, reverence, sense of propriety, sacramental life, love of order, organizing talent,—the degenerate vagaries due to Geneva were equally distasteful. He warned his clergy against ‘pseudo-catholicity’ on the one hand, and on the other against ‘low and defective views’ of the ministry and sacraments, on account of which ‘multitudes who [were] born in the church have gone away into strange folds or into the dreary com-

mon of the world.' The remedy lies in presenting the church as a divine institution, remembering meanwhile that sectarians, though in error, are more to be pitied than condemned.

His attitude herein represented pretty accurately that of his compeers. Otey held that 'the church has divine power fully but not exclusively.' Elliott preferred Archbishop Bramhall's distinction of 'churches perfect or imperfect' to that of 'church or no church.' And Atkinson, as represented by Lay, 'with all his uncompromising adherence to his ideal of the catholic church,' held that 'catholic principles' are perfectly compatible with 'Christian charity.' 'In every one who loved his Lord . . . he recognized a brother. . . . Far from disparaging religious excellence, he recognized it and rejoiced in it wherever found. In those systems and organizations with which he could not personally co-operate, he was the last to deny the merit of their administrative methods, the activity of their zeal, or the beneficial results of their ministrations. . . . It is not illogical to hold,' Lay continued, 'that division is in itself a sin and a disgrace, while we believe that with the many it is a misfortune rather than a fault,— . . . that Almighty God has certain channels for the transmission of his spiritual graces, and that our personal safety and a just regard to the highest interests of humanity require that we should stand in the old paths . . . [while we] believe with Archer Butler that God binds us but not himself by these prescriptions, that there is a merciful accommodation to altered circumstances, however they may have originated in a fault, so that grace is not frustrated by reason of our innovations and irregularities. . . . God forbid that in our zeal for order and authority we should deny that God's

word is efficacious as spoken by earnest men of other orders or of no orders at all! God forbid that we should deny that grace is conferred to godly people in sacraments ministered otherwise than as we would dare to minister them! And even Green, with his insistence on authority, his distrust of 'self-appointed orders,' his inclination—singular among his southern contemporaries—to Ogilby's formula, 'No Priest, no Baptism,' insomuch that misgiving as to his Presbyterian baptism drove him, even after his ordination, to apply for the rite to a church clergyman,—even he repudiated any denial of God's grace or the possibility of salvation to any who could not see 'the doctrine of ministerial authority' in the light in which he saw it.

To Cobbs' gentle spirit controversy was repugnant, yet he was no compromiser; he never acquiesced in the patently deceitful commonplace, 'All roads lead to the same place.' 'Then why leave the old road?' he would reply. 'Our ancient church presents to the humble and honest inquirer after truth a place of quiet and an ark of safety.' Hence his anguish of soul at intestine schism, at the war of high and low—waged with more zeal, more deplorable lack of charity, more disgraceful and scandalous acrimony than ever the mortal struggle with infidelity and iniquity evoked.

His life and character were so powerful an argument for the system that he professed and attracted so many to it that he was roundly charged with proselytism. A pamphlet was actually launched at him with the accusation that he had offered a female Methodist a cow if only she would turn Episcopalian! 'Ah,' said he when told of it, 'I could tell them worse things about myself than that! In fact, I would gladly give her two cows. Why should people

complain of me because I love them so well that I want them to live with me? The greatest harm I wish to Presbyterians and Methodists is to see them good members of the church.'

On his travels about the diocese he loved to visit natives of his own state, without regard to their religious persuasion. Once, while stopping with a hospitable family of Baptists whom—or at least whose connections—he had known in Virginia, he found the daughter of his host examining his prayer-book, which by an oversight he had left in the sitting-room, and for which he was looking. 'Give me that book,' he said, 'for I would not hurt your parents' feelings.' 'What do you mean?' she asked, surprised. 'I mean that if you read that book you will become an Episcopalian.' The girl laughed and said she was in no danger. 'Give it to me,' he repeated; 'I wouldn't have your father and mother think that I requited their kindness so.' When next he visited that place the young girl applied for confirmation,—she had somehow in the meantime become possessed of a prayer-book; and not long after her family followed her into the church.

His dislike of the ceremonial of immersion continued unabated. Two young women once urged him to baptize them in that fashion, and he said he would upon two conditions: first, that the ceremony should take place very early in the morning, soon after daybreak, and second, that only members of their family should attend. The conditions were too much for them,—'took the glory out of it,' as he remarked, in private.

There was no Unitarian society in Montgomery, and therefore presumably none in the state. A large, wealthy and influential family of that persuasion took up their

abode in the city and ere long, through the bishop's influence, became attached to the church. Throughout the south the Unitarian movement was feeble to the vanishing point; out of Charleston, in fact, it can hardly be called a movement. A society was started in Savannah, and its minister publicly challenged Bishop Elliott to a debate—but the bishop bided his time and ultimately had the satisfaction of purchasing their place of worship for a colored congregation.

Cobbs' success in making converts was such that the sectarian leaders took alarm, and preferred against the church ever more loudly and persistently the charge of formalism. This drew from him in 1849 his apologetic tract, printed in Tuscaloosa, 'An Answer to Some of the Popular Objections against the Protestant Episcopal Church.' It is to be observed that for obvious reasons the entire literary product of southern churchmen in that age was homiletic and apologetic, that is, purely practical. There existed no incentive to theological reflection, no opportunity for profound historical and critical research. And further: Cobbs' genius perfectly qualified him for the task of defending the church's system against the assaults of the Methodists, as Otey's did for a similar defence against those of the Presbyterians and Campbellites. Both the tract just mentioned and Otey's 'Three Sermons' must be carefully studied by any who would apprehend the conditions of those times.

The first 'popular objection' to the church was 'That she does not teach spiritual, vital, experimental religion, the religion of the heart.' This charge the apologist refuted by a catena of passages from her formularies: 'make clean our *hearts*—deliver from blindness of *heart*—give a

*heart* to love and fear Thee—cleanse the thoughts of our *hearts*—incline our *hearts* to keep this law—may Thy word be grafted inwardly in our *hearts*—the peace of God keep your *hearts*,' etc. 'We thus see that it is heart-religion all through and through the service of the church,—that in her daily teaching the church begins and ends with the heart.' (The bishop loved to recognize 'in the "Sursum Corda," that most ancient of liturgical exclamations, the testimony of the church catholic to the indispensableness of religious affection.') He appealed further to her use of the psalms; instead of individual experiences or private confession she introduces us to the experiences and confessions, 'exercises, frames and feelings' of the king of Israel.

The second objection was 'That she teaches her members to rely too much on ordinances and sacraments, on morality only and not enough on the merits of the Lord Jesus Christ.' This was repelled in like manner by reference to her standards: in her prayer-book and articles salvation through Christ's merits alone is explicitly set forth. She insists on good works, it is true, as evidences of faith,—on the sacraments as of divine appointment, generally necessary to salvation, as means of grace, pointing to Christ,—but she discards the *opus operatum* view, sacramental justification, and the meritoriousness of works. The third charge, 'That she tolerates too much worldly conformity among her members,' the bishop denied, but with sadness in his mien: it is not so, but such members are unfaithful—for in their baptism they renounced 'the vain pomp and glory of the world.'

It is strange that the unimpeachable evangelical soundness of that group of famous bishops did not shame to

silence such uncharitable imputations. In the midst of the spiritual confusion of the hour, Bishop Polk, in his large, statesmanlike way, bade his diocese 'adhere to our liturgy, articles and homilies,' whence he deduced the evangelical summary: the fall of Adam—consequent impotence of man—sufficiency of the grace of God—bestowed for the sole merit of Christ. 'Our confidence is that as a diocese we may be ever found in the old paths of the Reformation and the early church.' We should show kindness toward all with whom we differ, within our fold or without, 'so that it may be seen that our purpose is not so much the establishment of the dogmas of a sect or faction, as to settle and make permanent those great truths indispensable to the perfection of the plan of the common salvation.' Bishop Elliott taught that 'Our whole change [from the world to God] is produced by the Spirit of God.' And Otey was a consistent Protestant; Latimer, Ridley, and Jewel were his admiration; he affirmed the necessity of a spiritual re-creation: 'one creation does not serve our turn.'

We have reached the central year of the century, early in which the subject of this memoir completed his fifty-fifth year. Soon thereafter he journeyed to the capital of Mississippi and, the second Saturday in Lent, assisted in the consecration of a church there, preaching the sermon. The day following he united with Otey, Polk, and Freeman in the consecration of William Mercer Green, who had been called from his professorship of 'belles-lettres' to take charge of the young diocese. Green perpetuated in Mississippi, in sharply accentuated fashion, the traditions and principles of the school of Ravenscroft and Otey, of both of whom he composed memoirs.

That was the first occasion on which Cobbs exercised his



highest ecclesiastical function; five times in all he participated in episcopal consecrations. After his return from Jackson he could report to his convention that in the past twelve months he had travelled over five thousand miles. There is no indication in his diary that he attended the General Convention this year, but on principle he let nothing stand in the way of that duty, and that it met in Cincinnati must have been, one would think, an added inducement to attend, affording him an opportunity to see his former parishioners there.

Within a year from its opening, the principal of the diocesan school at Tuscaloosa died, and it was suspended,—but undeterred by the failure of Elliott's experiment, the indefatigable bishop had meantime organized a similar school for girls at the same place.

He had already sounded a note of warning against ritualism, which he now reiterated: some undutiful, rebellious children were going 'behind the prayer-book, even to the period of the dark ages.' In his address of 1851 he quoted that of the English bishops to their respective dioceses upon the subject of ritual, commending 'its weighty and solemn counsels to the profound respect to which a document emanating from such a source is so justly entitled.' (We remark the provincial deference to Canterbury common among American churchmen of that day.) He counselled his clergy against innovations, 'undue elevation or fanciful decoration of the communion table or altar; shifting of drapery and paraphernalia on the great festivals and fast-days; overloading the walls with symbols and ornaments of very doubtful propriety and perchance of pagan origin; needless departure from long-established usage in dress, postures, or place where service is performed. . . . Let

nothing indicate . . . any approximation to the superstitious and idolatrous doctrine of transubstantiation.' Otey's sentiment was similar: he objected to intoning as unintelligible and mechanical,—'it reaches neither head nor heart,' he said. And 'error may be taught by material symbols or figures as certainly and effectually as by winged words which are themselves but symbols of thoughts or ideas. . . . To attempt the introduction of symbolism in material forms or figures the meaning or intent of which is not understood or obviously apparent, instead of effecting the objects aimed at, will have exactly the opposite tendency; will be perverted in its purposes, misrepresented in its aims, or condemned without enquiry. Instead of conciliating favor, the results will be in a vast majority of instances suspicion, dislike and aversion.' And he thought that to insist upon a ritual or decorative novelty was 'a lamentable proof of the absence of an instructed faith, an enlightened conscience and a sound mind.' When, accordingly, upon arrival at a church that he had been called to consecrate, 'he beheld over every gate of the yard a cross, three crosses on the roof, and one on the belfry,' and upon entering encountered a font at the south door, and beheld 'under the chancel window an altar which might properly be called *high*,—with five crosses painted on its front, a movable cross on a super-altar, and a cross in the window above,—and beside all this two large candlesticks of turned wood, placed there not for the purpose of giving light in the house but avowedly to enlighten the inner man—the mind and soul—by the mysterious power of symbolism,—it was too much,' says his biographer, 'for the uninstructed taste of the good bishop,' and he refused to proceed to the consecration until the candlesticks and movable cross were taken away.

His action gave great offence; Bishop Green admitted that he could not 'wholly approve' it, while explaining that Otey 'was tempted to look with suspicion and alarm upon any act or object . . . that might symbolize the heresies of Rome.' No service was held thenceforth in the little church, and it was left to lapse into ruin.

Atkinson deprecated any assimilation 'of our worship to the meretricious ceremonial of the Church of Rome.' Of Whittingham he said: 'It is not pretended that he liked ritualistic ceremonial; his mind was, as some suppose, not sufficiently æsthetic, or as I should say, too masculine for that.' Herein Lay frankly differed from him, as he tells us, 'both as to the fact and the explanation. Bishop Whittingham had æsthetic taste, . . . Bishop Atkinson was neither musical nor æsthetic. . . . But I cannot think that the masculine mind necessarily revolts from the æsthetic in religion. . . . Glory and beauty must characterize the adornments of the sanctuary and the sacred services therein.' Polk does not seem to have been disturbed by the ritual movement; very likely it had not reached his diocese. Of the whole group, Davis was most averse to the beautiful in public worship. Elliott 'declared himself opposed to "ritualism,"—yet something in the movement would, perhaps, commend itself to his love of the comely and appropriate, as worthy of God's worship and useful to the worshipper.'

The question presses, Why this practical unanimity of opinion?—and the sufficient answer is to be found in objection to the unaccustomed, lack of culture, evangelical prejudice, abhorrence of Rome. A serious obstacle, said Cobbs, 'is the very prevalent belief that the church is Romish in her sympathies and tendencies. It therefore

becomes our duty . . . to abstain from the introduction of all novelties.' He himself had done what he could to replace the black gown with the surplice throughout his diocese—but when certain of his clergy showed a disposition to go further, he drew back, and when one of them added altar-cloths and a cross, he pleaded with him against their use, especially against a material, movable cross: he would not object if the sign were merely painted on the wall back of the communion table! The good priest yielded, and stowed the precious embroideries away under the altar—whence they were drawn years after, mildewed and moth-eaten.

Why could the worthy bishop, who had accepted the Tractarian premise, not accept its ritual conclusion? It may be that ten more years had effected in his nature a crystallization against further progress. It is certain that he lacked the culture, acquired through study, travel, sight of objects of art, that would have enabled him to expand sufficiently to include the late æsthetic development in religion. It is worth noting that Elliott and Lay, who possessed, without doubt, riper culture than their brethren, had less—the latter indeed no—antipathy to ritual. But we must look deeper, to find the ultimately satisfactory answer in a 'beggarly element' that commonly inheres in evangelicalism,—a Montanistic, puritanic strain, not to be dignified with the name of spirituality but with that merely of immateriality: a dread of the beautiful as such, of the sensuous, however innocent: an ascetic, at bottom, Manichean prejudice that is not masculine but is narrow and weak, and needs to be eliminated by that grace of which the beautiful is the expression. For there is perfect harmony between the sincerest evangelicalism, unadulterated by that ungra-

cious element, and the utmost beauty and glory of the sanctuary and its worship.

In this respect, then, Cobbs was inconsistent. He refused to admit the logic of his position—and was not alone in so doing. We find, accordingly, contrarieties in his nature,—plain traces of that Montanistic leaven, and indications equally plain that it lacked but a little of being purged away. He did not object to decoration of a church at Christmas and Easter. Such decoration, to be sure, was in his day simple enough: at Christmas, sprigs of evergreen stuck in gimlet-holes in the ends of the pews, with perhaps a light festoon, and a few flowers, possibly a floral cross on the altar at Easter. These he never suggested or recommended, but also never discouraged if others wished them. He merely stipulated that the ladies who arranged them should keep their bonnets on! He objected decidedly to having the responses to the commandments sung, for he believed in hearty congregational response and song; for this and other reasons he disliked a quartette choir: he used to say, ‘Put four of the saintliest archbishops to sing in such a choir and it would corrupt them!’ He loved the old, familiar chants and hymns that all could join in, and sedulously excluded from divine service ‘fantastic’ music—as he termed any that approached the operatic.

While guarding against an error of excess, as he deemed it, on the one hand, he had to put away with the other an error of defect that touched him deeply. A controversy in the English church over baptismal regeneration issued this year in the Gorham judgment, favorable to the low-church view. Cobbs was moved to publish in Tuscaloosa a homiletic apology ‘On the Baptismal Covenant,’ according to which ‘we are not left to our natural state of weakness and

selfishness; for, if left to our own natural will and inclination, we should never turn away from the evil of our sins, nor would we have strength to contend against our sins even if we had the will; we therefore need something superadded, we need the awakening, sanctifying and sustaining grace of the Holy Spirit to work in us to will and to do.'

He accepted an invitation to preach in Tuscaloosa on the subject of temperance,—the more willingly because that subject 'has been too much given up by the church to other societies.'

In the fall of the year he travelled to Augusta, to take part with Bishops Gadsden and Elliott in the consecration of Francis Huger Rutledge as first bishop of Florida. Some years before, Rutledge had removed from St. Augustine to assume the rectorship of St. John's Church, Tallahassee. He received his degree in divinity from the same institution (Hobart) that had conferred it on Cobbs.

Early in the next year, Cobbs permitted the printing, at Greensboro, of a sermon of his upon the deadly sin of Avarice, which, he conceived, was growing more and more prevalent in society. 'Covetousness is a malignant and cancerous disease that penetrates and corrupts the whole moral system; it dries up and kills all the kindly feelings and sympathies of our natures.' The preacher dilated upon the evils of great inheritance, especially disputes over it between relatives, and on the folly of parents in heaping up property, not seldom by mean and unjust methods, thereby entailing a curse, and even when their gains were honestly gotten, depriving themselves of lawful satisfaction in benevolent outlay during their lifetime, in order that they might leave larger sums to be dissipated by extravagant

and profligate heirs or to be the subject of strife and feud between families. 'Of all the weaknesses common to our countrymen, there is none more universal and more glaring than an infatuation, a monomania regarding the value and importance of property, of money. . . . A very little knowledge of the world will teach us that happiness depends not so much on the property we possess or on the sphere in which we move, as on active employment under the sanctions of an approving conscience, with the humble hope of God's favor and benediction.'

The subject was evidently weighing upon his mind, for he enlarged upon it in a pastoral letter to one of his clergy: 'Take the rubric in the Visitation of the Sick—"the minister shall not omit earnestly to move such sick persons as are of ability, to be liberal to the poor." Here you can urge a practical duty that is fearfully neglected. How often does it happen that men have spent all their lives in the service of mammon, and when about to die, they offer up a few prayers, are told to believe in Christ, and thus leave the world with the confident hope of heaven, without any chance of bringing forth fruits meet for repentance, and without giving anything in the way of alms and charitable deeds. . . . It is an awful thing to be teaching men that they can go to heaven, although they die with their coffers filled with unjust and unlawful gain!'

The letter contained other excellent advice, much of which helps to define his own practice and position. 'One sermon on Sunday is as much as you ought to undertake, and let the afternoon be devoted to easy, familiar talks about the prayer-book. In this way you can say a great many things, doctrinal, practical, experimental, historical and ecclesiastical,—things which people ought to know

and which cannot well be brought out in a systematic sermon.

'Take the rubric in the communion office and . . . show the true notion of the sacrament, that it is a feast upon a sacrifice, or a commemorative sacrifice. Thus again, a "white linen cloth" must be used, by which the church guards against the idea of an altar in the strict sense of the word.

' "Then shall follow the sermon."

'Here again is a fruitful theme for a lecture: show that while the church places a very high estimate on sacraments, she does not underrate preaching, always requiring a sermon before the eucharist.'

(Sufficient evidence, that, that celebrations at daybreak were undreamt of in that day.)

'Again in the Marriage Service, explain how the father is called upon to give his personal consent, to show that the parties have not run away nor forged a license.

'Again in the preface to the Ordinal, observe the wisdom of the church in recognizing the Scriptures interpreted by ancient authors as the rule of faith. How she avoids the error of the Romanist in the matter of tradition and of the ultra-Protestant in that of private judgment!'

Later in the year the bishop moved with his family to Montgomery—following the capital, it will be observed—and took possession of the pleasant old house, still occupied by his descendants, on rising ground then somewhat out of the city. Not long after, Bishop Polk settled in New Orleans, where, says his biographer, 'he ought always to have lived'; his social influence was henceforth powerful, and the church and her missions were strengthened by the change.



Cobbs added to his episcopal duties those of the rectorship of St. John's Church, Montgomery, his income thence eking out an otherwise deficient salary. He opened the first church for colored people in the city, and instituted a free school for poor white children wherein some young ladies of his parish served in weekly rotation as teachers. One of his sound pastoral principles was to find plenty of charitable and religious work for his parishioners to do, and thereby to ensure their interest.

At the end of the year, the apostasy of Ives was felt by his southern peers almost as a personal mortification: 'he has gained the unenviable notoriety,' wrote Otey, 'of being the first of his order in our church to make a formal submission to the Roman pontiff.' (Did the bishop mean to refer only to the American church, or had he forgotten or never heard of Godfrey Goodman?)

Levi Silliman Ives was born in Meriden, Connecticut, at the close of the eighteenth century. He started out in life with the intention of studying for the Presbyterian ministry, but changing his mind and his religious connection, sought the orders of the church. Bishop Hobart directed his studies, and ordered him deacon in the year 1822. Columbia College conferred on him the doctorate in divinity, and after he had served for some years as a priest in New York and Pennsylvania, he succeeded Ravenscroft as bishop of North Carolina. He was of an impressionable, emotional, even excitable temperament, and his conduct had begun to excite apprehension, but few were prepared for the news that, while travelling for his health, he had been received at Rome into the papal obedience.

His diocese remained apparently unaffected by his action; only one member, a lady, followed him to his new

communion; and the low-church reaction that might have been expected did not ensue.

He did not enjoy much distinction or influence in the Roman church. He was invested with a professorship in its seminary at Fordham, lectured on literature in the Convent of the Sacred Heart, and became president of the order of St. Vincent de Paul. In due course of time he published, doubtless under the direction of his superiors, an account of his change of faith entitled 'Trials of a Mind in its Progress to Catholicism.' It simply repeats the familiar story; appetite for infallibility drove him thither. Nothing will satisfy 'the yearning of the heart,' he said, but *certainly*. We see around us multitudinous sects, and when we turn to the brethren find 'confusion and mutual strife.' Where is infallibility? The Anglican church does not even claim it. So he will go where it is claimed. There must be a Head of the church: such the pope has been from the beginning—and submission to him is peace.

The event elicited some fervent passages in the episcopal addresses of 1853, a catena of which may prove interesting and valuable. 'The secession of the late bishop of North Carolina,' Cobbs averred, had inflicted a deep wound upon the church; it was perhaps a divine chastisement for departure too far 'from the Protestant principle of the church as established at the Reformation,—too much tampering with Romish books, doctrines and usages.' 'Any man is in danger,' said Elliott, 'who becomes discontented with the Scriptural principles on which our Reformation was planted and sighs after practices and usages of which he thinks Protestantism has unjustly deprived him.' And Polk: 'North Carolina has been deprived of episcopal oversight from a cause . . . which can only be explained

upon the hypothesis of either mental or moral insanity on the part of the unhappy man who until recently presided over and directed its spiritual interests.' Otey reported that Ives had 'fallen at the feet of him who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God. . . . While we deplore his treachery, let us pray God to recover him from the snare in which he has been taken.' And Green was the severest of all: 'The corrupt church of Rome has received to her embrace one who was once among the foremost in the cause of gospel truth, and who had upon his soul the three-fold vows of the priesthood. . . . [He] has betrayed the most solemn trust ever committed to man, by renouncing his apostolic commission and throwing himself into the arms of Antichrist . . . —has foresworn his allegiance to Him who had called him to the office of a bishop in the church, and has subjugated both body and soul to the will of a fallible worm like himself. At such desertion of the highest and holiest of trusts we might well feel indignant.'

The deeper feeling, resembling resentment, of the last three speakers, is accounted for by their peculiar interest in the afflicted diocese, of which two of them were natives.

That defection, in connection with another yet more mortifying, suggests that more emphasis should be laid on church parentage in considering a man's qualifications for the episcopal office. We owe, of course, many exemplary priests to the various Protestant bodies,—men who have found in the church what they were in search of, and who often prove strong, even narrow ecclesiastics,—but experience shows that such may sometimes spend half a lifetime in the church without having fully and truly assimilated her genius.

On the promulgation of the dogma of the immaculate conception, Lay wrote: 'The question concerning the seat of infallibility is no longer open as before. The pope may at any time impose a new article of faith, under penalty of anathema.'

If there was one thing that came near exhausting Bishop Cobbs' vast store of patience, it was any imitation of Romish peculiarities. Hence, as in the case of his prototype Griswold, the perversities of ritualism put the sorest strain upon his charity, came nearest to making him lose his temper. Upon this point it is interesting to find him appealing already to American tradition: 'in conducting the worship of the church, there has been established a common law of custom sanctioned by the authority of such men as Bishops White, Seabury, Hobart, Ravenscroft, Dehon, Griswold and Moore, and from such a law I should think it inexpedient to depart. . . . Follow the customs and usages of the Fathers of the American church.'

A better list it would be impossible to frame: the memoirs of those seven bishops are all that is necessary—but every one of them is necessary—to a sufficient knowledge of the history of the American church in the first half-century of the republic. And as many more would serve as well for its second half-century.

At the General Convention that year, Ives was formally deposed as having 'renounced the communion of the church and made his submission to the bishop of Rome as universal bishop of the Church of God and vicar of Christ upon earth, thus acknowledging these impious pretensions of that bishop . . . and binding himself under anathema to the antichristian doctrines and practices imposed by the council of Trent.' Thomas Atkinson was consecrated in

his room,—‘an old and intimate and much-loved friend,’ wrote Cobbs, ‘with whom I had oft taken sweet counsel when laboring in parishes side by side in Virginia. It was truly gratifying to see him placed in a position in which I cannot but believe the great blessing of God will rest upon his labors.’ ‘How goodly a presence was his!’ said Lay: ‘a manly form, a noble head, a countenance in which intellectual power, strength of will and sweetness of temper were harmoniously combined, and were the more lovely for the singular absence of self-consciousness.’

On the same occasion, Thomas Frederick Davis was consecrated for the bishopric of South Carolina, in place of Gadsden, lately deceased. In consequence of a sore bereavement, it is believed, Davis had been converted to Christianity, and had surrendered the practice of the law. He was ordained by Bishop Ives, and after serving in several parishes in his native state he removed to Camden, South Carolina, to take charge of the parish there.

It was in that convention of 1853 that Dr. Muhlenberg introduced his famous Memorial. A committee, of which Bishop Otey was chairman, was appointed to consider it.

Bishop Cobbs returned thence by sea to Charleston, and so home. He loved rice (so he used to say), but not Carolina politics. Once, having invited a South Carolinian to dine with him, he bade his wife ‘be sure to have rice on the table, cooked just right,—every grain standing out like a nullifier!’ Of another he inquired if, when she died, she was going to Charleston?

In the month of January, 1854, he returned upon his steps as far as Savannah, to unite with Elliott and Davis in the consecration of Thomas Fielding Scott—a native of North Carolina, for many years a Presbyterian minister—

as first missionary bishop of the territories of Oregon and Washington. 'It was an occasion of deep interest,' he reported, 'and many earnest prayers were offered up in behalf of that worthy brother, about to go forth to that far distant and arduous field of labor.'

At that very time a letter of his to a clerical friend in Virginia betrays a little home-sickness, a little depression of health and spirits: 'I can never love any people as much as those early friends in the hills and mountains of Virginia.

'I have nothing very encouraging to write in reference to my diocese: the church is growing slowly, but is suffering much for the want of ministers; and even when we get ministers they are often restless and unsettled amid the discouragements and trials of a new country. . . . It is not to be wondered at that they get out of heart and change their places. I have myself often felt how different a new country is from an old one.'

His spirits had lately been overwhelmed and his health affected by the death of a beloved and devoted daughter. He needed imperatively the physical and mental renovation that comes from change of air and scene, and the streaming in through the senses upon the mind of manifold new impressions. Funds were provided, accordingly, to enable him to make a voyage to Europe. Before he left, his portrait was painted by Heade—presumably Martin Johnson Heade, a Pennsylvanian, who began his career as a portraitist, visited Brazil to make studies of its birds, and thereafter turned to landscape-painting. His likeness of the bishop in his robes is pleasing, and of undeniable artistic merit: a little low in tone and color, like his subject, but excellently composed and handled with evident sympathy. It is a seated half-length and three-quarter view;

the eyes are mild, the lips eloquent, the whole air and expression bland, gentle and attractive; and it is pronounced by competent judges an admirable likeness. It is well known through reproductions; the original hangs beside the altar in St. Luke's Oratory, Sewanee.

In the summer of 1856 the bishop sailed for England,—a land that he had always loved. Mystery hangs over that journey; we know next to nothing about the places he visited or the people he met; he returned abruptly, and said little of his experience. Yet in those days a trip abroad was the event of a lifetime and a patent of distinction. It is believed that he spent most of the time in London. He saw the Queen review in Hyde Park the troops just back from the Crimea. He dined with Lady Franklin, but it is not known whom he met on that occasion. He is remembered to have spoken with admiration of the Abbey and the Temple Church. Did he see Maurice? Dr. Muhlenberg had visited him a year before, and attended his Bible-class of workingmen. Bishop Wilmer's testimony is that Cobbs would have sympathized far more with Maurice, for his churchly views, than with Frederick Robertson. Did he visit Oxford? These questions, apparently, can never be answered. We know that in spite of his general sympathy with the Oxford movement, he did not take much to Pusey's writings: when one of his presbyters sought to interest him in them and praised them excessively, he replied, 'I'll take your word for it.' He met Dean Burgon, and received from him at parting a fitting gift—the saintly Andrewes' 'Devotions,' in their Greek original. He was in England only for a very few weeks—not more than three or four: why did he return so soon? It cannot have been that his funds gave out. The

only reference to the trip in his journal reads: 'June, July and August. Absent from home on a voyage to England.' The only reason he would ever give his family was that letters from home miscarried, and he grew anxious. He does not seem to have been disappointed in the trip; it is certain that he returned with enlarged ideas of church and education, and with yet more ardent love and admiration of England. He longed 'to bring back the olden times of English learning,—scholarship and piety,' said Elliott—who was surprised at the unwonted degree of enthusiasm and power with which he entered into and promoted the project of a southern university. Of the English language he believed that it would be a means of converting the world to Christ, and he admired the elastic conservatism of the British government: he 'would be willing to live under a queen,' he said, half in jest and all in earnest, 'if our government should fail.'

It must indeed have seemed to him as if that were breaking up. He returned to find that he had fallen upon evil times; the few remaining years of his life were the dreariest period in American annals. There were bloodshed in Kansas, filibustering in the Caribbean, and threats of a re-opening of the slave-trade,—and in consequence of these the free-soil and anti-slavery elements rapidly coalesced in a new party, the Republican, which showed its strength in the presidential election immediately after the bishop's return. Two parties were ready and desirous to break up the Union,—the abolitionists and the secessionists: those on the one hand who would identify the state and national governments with freedom, and on the other, with slavery. Between was what was still the vast majority of those who would maintain the Union; those on the one hand who



would recognize slavery as a state but not as a national institution, who would not touch it where it was established but would exclude it from the territories (the Republican party); those on the other hand who would leave the question to be decided by popular sovereignty in the several territories (the Douglas Democrats); and finally those of whom there are always a good number who in troublous times adopt the feeble policy of simply ignoring the burning question of the hour (represented by Bell of Tennessee). But that hour was given to the forces of disunion; Yancey's star was in the ascendant. The legislative, administrative and judicial departments of the general government went down one by one before the slave power: in 1857 the Dred Scott decision committed the constitution, the government, the nation to slavery. What more could Yancey want? The Carolinian and Mississippian view was now fast becoming the Alabamian and paramount: Washington, Jefferson, Monroe and the Virginians of old time were irreverently dubbed 'old fogies' by Yancey, and were pronounced 'unsound on the slavery question.' He sneered at 'Union-loving fogies,' (of whom Bishop Cobbs was one of the heartiest!) and in 1858 fulminated his fittingly addressed Slaughter Letter, recommending 'committees of safety to fire the southern heart, instruct the southern mind, . . . and precipitate the cotton states into a revolution.' Yet even in Montgomery there were unionists enough to form in their alarm a coalition that proved strong enough to keep the gory and ramping lion in his cage for three more mortal years.

In his address of 1857, the bishop touched on his trip to England—'that noble land from which we have derived our language, our laws, our domestic and social habits, our

religion and our church.' Only a few years before Bishop Otey too had sought recuperation in foreign travel, and had borne witness to the 'friendly interest toward the United States and the Protestant Episcopal Church in every part of England that he had visited,' to the 'warm reciprocation of the feeling by American churchmen,' and his own 'earnest conviction and hope that this regard will strengthen the ties of amity between the two nations, and knit the members of the communion closer.' From that visit he derived fresh interest and hope in the cause of church education in America.

Cobbs next introduced to his convention a 'plan for a southern university. The object of the proposed university is to afford a thorough education under the sanctions of the church in a locality convenient of access to our southern youth.'

It will be remembered that twenty years before Bishop Otey had projected a literary and theological seminary for the southwestern dioceses, Tennessee, Mississippi and Louisiana—for the lower Mississippi valley, in a word,—and that the project had been nipped in the bud by the financial blight of 1837. Then ensued a period of separate diocesan efforts, almost invariably ending in disheartening failure, for the education of youth of either sex. The time was now ripe for an institution on a grand scale, a university in support of which the southeastern as well as the southwestern dioceses should co-operate,—and this larger idea, educationally and geographically, sprang from the brain of Bishop Polk. Family traditions, early training and experience, travel and culture contributed to mould an idea that was altogether consonant with his genius. When we inquire into the relation between the two thoughts, Otey's

and Polk's, we see that the former was at the base of the latter, that the latter included the former, that essential elements were common to both, that there was in fact a common idea to which various minds and various experience contributed, and which had an organic growth within the limitations of the environment. Yet it is also undoubtedly true that if Otey had never lived Polk would have matured his design.

It will be remembered also that for a generation there had been extraordinary activity in denominational education. 'Under the educational systems of the day,' said Otey, 'the momentous truth has been often disregarded that intellectual power, unregulated and unrestrained by sound moral and religious principles, tends only to mischief and to misery. Influenced doubtless by these considerations so obvious to religious thought, most Christian denominations have lately sought to found seminaries of learning under their own exclusive control.' And the interest of churchmen in the cause was not exhausted by the early efforts before noted, as is proved by the seminaries, colleges and schools that sprang up at this very time at Nashotah, Racine, Davenport, Annandale and Concord. And of all this activity the grandest phenomenon was the conception of the University of the South. Prefix the term 'Church,' which some suggested, and the title is perfectly descriptive of the basal ideas of the institution. It was to be a university, an institution of the highest and most comprehensive learning, where (in the words of Bishop Cobbs) 'Education should be connected with religion according to the doctrines and worship of the Church,'—and it was to be for southern youth, for southern dioceses and states, for the South. Upon this latter point the prime movers were

explicit: Polk pointed out that almost all the school-teachers and tutors of the region were from the North, and that for higher education young men had to go thither—and 'we are afraid of the influence of northern seminaries and colleges on the mind of southern youths. We have done our share of receiving,' he added, and the time for action has come. 'The youth of the southwest,' said Otey, 'for the most part seek the advantages of education by a resort to some of our northern colleges. This they do confessedly at an additional expense arising from the distance they have to travel, at the hazard of injury to the physical constitution arising from differences of climate and habits of living which render their sojourn there and their return to a southern home alike dangerous; and above all at the risk of weakening those domestic ties and early associations connected with the parental domicile which are seldom severed but at the expense of virtue and happiness.'

The interest of New Orleans in the proposed university was strong from the outset. The conviction was general that it was best for the young people of the city and the state to pass their school terms in a cooler climate. As early as the year 1849 Bishop Polk began privately to discuss the matter, and in 1852 began to gather information concerning the educational systems of England, France and Prussia. The very loss of his fortune now afforded him more leisure for the elaboration of the design. He aspired to found 'a church university,' as he wrote to Elliott, that should 'rival Harvard or Yale'; his ideal grew larger: only a little later we hear him refer to his 'scheme for founding an Oxford, a Göttingen or a Bonn, or all three combined.' Of the mass of documents he collected, English, French and German, he sensibly wrote: 'I trust that

we shall deal with them neither in the spirit of servile copyists nor yet with that ridiculous modern conceit which affects superiority to the lessons of experience, but that, with an eye to the peculiarities of our national and local circumstances and necessities, we will give to everything its appropriate value, take what meets our own case and leave the rest alone.'

As a matter of fact, Oxford furnished the controlling model.

Tributary schools in the different dioceses were a feature of the design, which was certainly the grandest yet in the history of education in America. The university was to comprise nearly two-score schools, academic and professional, which should furnish about all the instruction that any one could seek in the ancient and modern languages and literatures, history, the fine arts, 'including sacred music,' natural, political and moral science, metaphysics and the evidences of Christianity, theology, law and medicine. A broad domain was to be secured, buildings that should be architectural exemplars were to be erected, and distinguished professors to be invited from all parts of the learned world. From early experience at West Point, Polk had conceived a strong aversion to the system of herding students together in dormitories, instead of which he would introduce a domestic plan: families of refinement, of elegant social and mental polish and culture, were to be induced to take up their residence at the university and keep houses for the students, of whom not more than a dozen were to live in any one hall. He desired for them the utmost possible degree of domestic life; hence in part the long vacation was to occur in winter, that then they might return to their more southerly homes, while in the summer

months he hoped that their parents would more and more make the university their home. He expected and desired that it would become a favorite place of resort in the hot season, and believed that thus much benefit would accrue to southern society and civilization. For men of letters were to be attracted thither by special and highly remunerative lectureships; a press was to be established, whence might issue scholastic publications, a literary magazine, etc.; and so at length a vigorous and creditable southern literature might be reared up. Equally elevated was his conception of the spiritual benefits that would ensue: a native ministry, so imperatively demanded by 'the peculiar civilization,' of the South; an ecclesiastical capital, a focus of church activity, devotional, intellectual, practical, a common centre whereat all narrow and segregative local and diocesan tendencies and prejudices should be transcended—'we must rise above diocesan considerations,' he wrote to Elliott; finally and further, a point of religious union—for even so far did his vision extend: a common interest for all Christians all over the South, especially, of course and of necessity, for those of evangelic persuasion, between whom and the church he thought there was much in common. Nor were his aspirations bounded even here; in his view there was not a class that would not receive benefit from the Christianizing and civilizing influences and agencies of the institution—and most of all the subject race. It will have been observed that the institution was projected first from the latitude of New Orleans, then for all the Gulf, cotton and plantation states; he believed that labor in the border states would ultimately become free. He trusted that the ideals to be maintained by the university would prove a corrective to the materialistic tendencies of

the day, would inspire, enlarge and ennoble the views of southern politicians, would cherish a sound and enlightened conservatism, and would thus and every way indirectly but powerfully contribute to the welfare of the whole country—for the good of a part is the good of the whole.

In July, 1856, he broached the project in a circular letter to the bishops of the Gulf states, Georgia, the Carolinas, Tennessee and Arkansas—the ten plantation states. He pointed to the inadequacy and ill-success of state, denominational and diocesan institutions of learning, showed that while none of the dioceses singly was equal to the task of supporting a college, they could if combined create and maintain an institution on a grand scale, and concluded with the suggestion that the railroad system already in operation indicated East Tennessee as its site. In reply he received from Atkinson, Davis, Rutledge and Otey letters 'expressing satisfaction with the plan,' from Green and Freeman (of Arkansas and Texas) verbal assent, while 'several of Cobbs' clergy' assured him of his co-operation. Elliott had been his confidant from the first. So began an overwhelming correspondence.

All the journals of New Orleans were loud in favor of the plan, and from the city and the state came the first and largest promises of financial aid. For three millions of dollars were estimated as necessary for the splendid design—but the bishop had only begun solicitation of funds ere he received pledges amounting to half a million. All over the South the utmost enthusiasm was evinced, as at a declaration of mental independence. 'A movement has been made,' Otey notified his convention, 'in which the bishop of Louisiana, whom we all know and honor for his enlarged and enlightened views, has taken the lead, which looks to

the establishment and endowment of an institution on the most liberal scale . . . which shall furnish the young men of this vast and important region with ample facilities for enlarged literary and professional education. There cannot be conceived a sound reason, we apprehend, for compelling the rising generation to go abroad in search of these advantages when it is in our power to supply them at home.'

On Independence Day, 1857, the bishops of seven dioceses, clerical and lay representatives from as many, and a throng of visitors numbering several hundred, met on the summit of Lookout Mountain, commanding a glorious prospect of height and plain, its base washed by a fine, serpentine curve of the Tennessee river, that rounds in the near distance the hill about whose base lies the town of Chattanooga. The day was chosen as a 'witness to loyalty,' for the scheme had excited suspicion at the North; the American flag was borne before the procession by one of the last surviving soldiers of the Revolution, and a band played patriotic airs. Thus, among rocks and trees, upon the topmost ledges of the hill, was consummated the long desired and much needed union of the southern church, in a common educational interest. There was Otey, the senior in consecration, the appointed preacher of the day, soon to be chosen, on Cobbs' motion, president of the board of trustees, and first chancellor of the university; there were the brothers in heart and aim, Polk and Elliott; Green of Mississippi, destined to succeed the last as third chancellor; Rutledge of Florida, Davis of South Carolina,—and Cobbs, the senior of all in years, and the gentlest and wisest of them all. These were the seven bishops; among as many clerical delegates the most conspicuous were Gregg of South Carolina and Lay of Alabama.



The religious exercises were opened with the hundredth psalm, after which Bishop Green read for the lesson the twenty-second chapter of the book of Joshua. Then followed the *Te Deum*, and prayers by Bishop Cobbs; and after a reading of the Declaration of Independence, the sermon was delivered by Bishop Otey. It set forth the leading principles of the founders in a thoroughly patriotic strain, repelling 'the unfounded suspicion . . . of sectionalism. . . . Our aim is eminently national and patriotic, and as such should commend itself to every lover of his country. We rear this day an altar, not of political schism, but an "altar of witness" that we are of one faith and household. We contemplate no strife, save a generous rivalry with our brethren as to who shall furnish to this great Republic the truest men, the truest Christians and the truest patriots.'

'Thus far,' wrote Gregg in his account of the ceremony, 'the flag [under which the bishop stood] hung idly from its staff; but when [he] began to speak of our country and the love all good men bear it, a breeze came to stir the stars and stripes; and still, as he proceeded to denounce the thought that we would come with holy words upon our lips to plot mischief against our brethren, the flag waved more proudly than before, seeking the person of the speaker and causing his words to come as it were from the midst of its folds.'

The next day was Sunday, and Bishop Cobbs preached on the need of sympathy by even the wisest and strongest, and the misery of selfishness and indifference to others' needs and sorrows. His spirit, the spirit of brotherly-kindness, 'pervaded the assembled company to a singular degree.'

In November the trustees met at Montgomery, to decide upon a situation and a name. For the former, Atlanta and Sewanee were leading rivals, and Cobbs was exceedingly urgent that the university should be located in Alabama, preferably near Huntsville: he believed that the Tennessee mountains would prove too cold an elevation;—but the grandeur of its site, a princely donation of land, timber, coal, facility of transportation and other qualifications fixed the choice of the majority upon Sewanee. Titles were next proposed—‘The Church University,’ ‘The University of Sewanee,’—but the name proposed by Bishop Green satisfied the largest number.

Upon all this enthusiasm the financial crisis of 1857 smote with chilling, depressing effect. It is rather remarkable that as Otey’s early hopes were extinguished by the panic of 1837, so, just twenty years after, Polk’s larger design suffered serious retardation. The proportions, however, were reversed; the later panic was by no means as severe as the earlier one,—the design was far greater, fully able to weather that gale, though suffering a setback. Bishop Atkinson had not attended the university inaugural. He seems to have felt a kindly but not very enthusiastic interest in the plan. ‘This university,’ he told his convention, ‘promises not only to be of great benefit to the South but to all those high interests of learning, morality and religion, throughout our entire country, which the church is bound especially to have at heart,’ and he believed it would help to remove ‘the crying evil now pressing upon us,—an undisciplined, irreligious and consequently immoral youth.’ But, he added, ‘the extreme pecuniary embarrassment, under which our whole country has been suffering, has deferred the canvass for an endowment.’ But for that check

the corner-stone might have been laid in 1858, building pushed and professors engaged through 1859-'60, so that by the autumn of the latter year (when the stone was actually laid), some halls might have been ready for lectures and occupancy, and tuition have been begun.

Cobbs' diocesan treasury reflected the monetary shrinkage,—for people's charities seem first to suffer retrenchment in hard times. 'It will be a sad day for the church,' the bishop truly said, 'when she ceases to feel an interest and to put forth efforts in behalf of foreign missions. . . . I would rejoice to see a ten-fold increase of the amount given by this diocese to that cause. It is a great mistake to suppose that domestic missions are weakened by contributions to foreign, for it will be found that those congregations most interested in foreign are most liberal in supporting domestic missions.' He lamented that he had only four names on his list of candidates for holy orders: 'The real difficulty,' he said, 'is the indifference and worldliness of parents.' He had also to complain afresh of the inadequate support of the clergy.

A characteristic sermon of his entitled 'Christian Kindness,' on the thirty-second verse of the fourth chapter of St. Paul's Epistle to the Ephesians, was published at this time, by request, in Mobile. 'To be kind one to another,' ran its familiar strain, 'is one of the evidences that we are under the influence of the gospel of Christ. It is all idle to call ourselves Christians when we are wilful and selfish, harsh and ill-natured, bitter and malignant, reckless of the feelings, the rights and the comforts of others. How commonly and how greatly Christians fail here! What a want there is of kindness not only in their acts and deeds but in their words, in their tone and temper and spirit, in their

whole bearing and deportment. Ah, how unamiable do they often appear and what painful and mortifying reflections do they often suggest in the minds of those around them! A large portion of the happiness of life depends not on great deeds and efforts but upon little acts of attention and courtesy.'

July 3rd, 4th and 5th, 1858, he 'attended the meeting of the trustees of the University of the South at Beersheba Springs in Tennessee and whilst there preached once. After a full and free conference with the members of the boards, the trustees from Alabama determined to waive the question of reconsideration as to the location of the university and to acquiesce with the majority in the selection of Sewanee.' 'There are three primary and indispensable conditions [of location],' said Otey, 'which take precedence of all other considerations and to which all others are secondary, and these are: first, health, subsidiary to which are pure air and an ample supply of pure free-stone water; second, accessibility: the site must be within reach of the countries represented in the board in three or four days' travel by the ordinary means of conveyance; third, facility of obtaining supplies, including besides provisions, materials for building, fuel, etc.' These conditions, according to the best scientific advice, were most fully met by Sewanee.

'I would therefore,' Cobbs continued in his address of 1859, 'earnestly commend the claims of the university to the friends and members of the church in the diocese. The establishment of such a university is a matter of the gravest importance to the friends of the church in the south; and I trust that when the call is made for funds there will be on the part of this diocese a prompt, hearty, zealous and liberal response. I shall be sadly disappointed

if Alabama does not contribute two hundred and fifty thousand dollars to this most laudable object.' In similar strain Otey urged 'the people of Tennessee to imitate and emulate the liberality' of those of Louisiana, especially since the site of the university was 'within the bounds of their own state sovereignty. Language can scarcely magnify beyond due bounds,' he continued, 'the value and importance of this enterprise, if successfully accomplished, to the citizens of the ten states confederated for the projected work.'

Davis on the contrary referred quite formally to the meeting of 1857 in his ensuing address: apparently he could not follow Polk's advice to 'rise above diocesan considerations.' A projected theological school at Camden seems to have absorbed all his interest and energy; in 1859 he professed himself convinced of the need of theological tuition within the state and urged it upon the diocese.

The Alabama convention that year was 'the most numerously attended yet' in the diocesan history, and to it the bishop poured forth his controversy with his people over their worldliness, their worldly conformity; much was given to Fashion that was due to God. That, beside irreverence, seemed to him 'the great evil of the day, the great besetting sin. On all sides I find an eager and ravenous appetite for light, gay and worldly amusements.' He spoke, we are told, 'more sorrowfully than his wont,' and his charge was corroborated by the committee on the state of the church, which reported a general laxity of religious morals: the ball-room, the theatre, the 'drinking usages of society, the well-known implements of the gamester,' avarice, extravagance, self-indulgence—were perils besetting the church and Christian people on every side. The contributions

for the year were scanty though the times were no longer hard but on the contrary highly prosperous. The bishop's spirits were indeed so much depressed that he said he felt like climbing a mountain to escape the deluge of worldliness.

That this was not a mere subjective impression, or a local malady, is proved by the concurrence of his contemporaries. Otey was no rigorist; he enjoyed a game of chess as well as any one, and played without concealment: 'Whatever God sees,' he was wont to say, 'I am willing any man should see.' But he felt it incumbent upon him to issue a pastoral letter to his diocese upon 'Christian Manners,' reprobating a license that almost obliterated if it did not 'quite efface the line of distinction between the follower of Christ and the man of the world. Parties of pleasure involving a very considerable expense and a great waste of time,—objections the least considerable, contrasted with their acknowledged tendency to erase serious religious impressions, blunt pious sensibilities and introduce in their stead levity, frivolous manners and a gay, dissipating turn of mind,—are, I am sorry to say, of frequent recurrence among the families belonging to the communion of our church. . . . I would call upon these . . . to consider seriously with themselves whether they can reconcile it with any proper sense of Christian propriety thus to indulge themselves, when many of the ministers of that church which they profess to love and honor are struggling to live upon the scant allowance of one or two hundred dollars a year. I speak not of those laboring in heathen lands, in Asia's sickly clime or on Afric's burning sands, but of men in your midst.' And later he lifted up a louder note of expostulation and entreaty: 'Ignorance, irreligion and

fanaticism prevail around us,—and connected with these is that restless search for amusement which seeks for gratification in games of hazard, theatrical entertainments, public balls and other assemblages for social hilarity' whose tendency is 'to stifle watchfulness' and whose influence is fatal to 'the cultivation of holy desires and the growth of gracious affections. Yet they appear to be alarmingly on the increase throughout the land.' Elliott said that because we have no state religion 'it almost seems as if we considered ourselves as a nation without any religion at all.' But Atkinson's was the severest indictment: 'A troubled spirit, which doubts everything, which sees no certainty but what the senses teach . . . may be found in all ages and states of society, but particularly in an age which is on the one hand sensual and luxurious and on the other, inquisitive and enlightened. Such was the Augustan age in Rome; such was the eighteenth century in France; such, I cannot but believe, is the existing era in our own country. . . . Our age is a vicious age, if murder, adultery, burglary, robbery, peculation, fraud, theft and imposture constitute vice.' And so the people went dancing and sinning over the brink of civil war.

Meantime upon the mind's eye of the confiding bishop of Alabama there had dawned since his visit to England a vision far in advance of the age, as great in its way and as essential to the full health and vigor of his or any diocese as Polk's conception was to the prosperity of the whole province, and like that a unifying, organic idea,—the vision of an American cathedral. 'To see a female seminary of a high character,' so he told his convention in his last address but one, 'permanently established in the diocese under the auspices of the church, has been the great desire

of my episcopate,'—but now, at its close, he projected a mighty work, hoping to lay the foundations upon which his successor might build. As we have seen, he had an idea of a see city; he believed that a bishop should be a true metropolitan, that his place was at the capital, where his influence would prove most potent and beneficent, and whence it might radiate to the farthest bounds of the state. And now he would have a great metropolitan church, to be the centre and focus of diocesan life and light, devotional, educational, missionary, philanthropic. But let us listen to his own account of the plan, given in detail in a letter to one of his sons in orders:

'I am sometimes tempted to have you come and begin with me my great plan which I wish my successor to carry out, and for which I design to collect materials: a plan which my successor could consummate, and thus enable a bishop to be not simply a chairman of the convention but the heart, the motive power and the controlling agent of his diocese, and thus let him be—what has never been in our church in the United States—a real Bishop in the gospel sense of the word. The plan is this: to have a large church in the centre of a quadrangle, to be forever under the control of the bishop, with free seats, to be opened every morning at sunrise with an air on the chime of bells and closed at sunset in the same way: double daily service: every Sunday and saint's day a sermon and the Holy Communion, with the offertory as a means of revenue; the church to cost about seventy-five thousand dollars and to be called All Souls. On the line of the quadrangle around the church a number of neat Gothick buildings corresponding with the style of the church, to be used as follows:

'1, for a diocesan library and the office of the bishop;



- ' 2, the house for sexton and bell-ringer, etc. ;
  - ' 3, for the priest and his family,—the vice-rector of the church ;
  - ' 4, for an infirmary and house of mercy, to be under the control of the deaconesses ;
  - ' 5, for a deaconess and four sub-deaconesses ;
  - ' 6, the steward's house, for boarding the deacons, the candidates for orders, and the students at the classical school ;
  - ' 7, house for candidates for orders ;
  - ' 8, house for a high classical school,—the teacher being bound to speak only in the Latin language ;
  - ' 9, house for six or eight deacons, who should go in and out doing missionary work on plantations and the surrounding country.
- ' The deaconesses to board themselves in their own house and of course to marry when they pleased.
- ' The bishop could thus infuse his own mind and spirit into his diocese ; he could train up his clergy to know and to carry out the mind of the church ; with the aid of the deacons, the candidates for orders, and the deaconesses, he could teach schools,—Sunday schools, charity schools, etc. ; could gather in the poor and visit the sick and thus cause the church to be seen in her beauty and felt in her power.
- ' What would you think of coming down and starting this work with me? Tell Mr. Lay that after Convention I shall begin to collect materials for this great work, and that if he is my successor he must carry out my plan in ten years' time. He could do it with all ease in that time, and then he would have an instrumentality for good that no bishop has had in the United States. The whole would cost about one hundred and seventy-five thousand dollars,

and this sum may easily be raised in ten years with the help of what I can collect and deposit in my lifetime. If I were ten years younger I would start the work at once and would teach the classical school myself.—

‘P. S. As David felt himself unworthy to build the temple, but contented himself with collecting materials, I am restrained from beginning the work not only by my age but by a feeling similar to that of David.’

Though that great and good and truly catholic plan ‘miscarried at that time,’ it could not perish utterly. In fact, it more than sketched out the ecclesiastical advance of the remainder of the century, and remains a commanding ideal for ensuing generations.

The eleventh and twelfth days of August, the bishop reported, he ‘attended the meeting of the board of trustees of the University of the South. This important institution has every prospect of being most successfully established.’ On his return, he preached and confirmed at Winchester, at Otey’s request.

In October he went to what proved to be one of the most interesting and memorable in the long roll of general conventions. It met for the first time as far south as Richmond. During its sessions five bishops were consecrated and a sixth was elected, and the church became at last conterminous with the nation. Bishop Cobbs joined Bishops Kemper, De Lancey and others in the imposition of hands upon Henry Benjamin Whipple, consecrated for the new state of Minnesota, and ten days later united with Bishops Meade, McIlvaine, Polk, Elliott and Atkinson in the consecration (the fifth and last in which he took part) of his faithful young disciple of former days, later his devoted friend, like-minded in all high designs, and now at

last his brother in the episcopate—Henry Champlin Lay, fourth missionary bishop of Arkansas. Of that trio of sympathetic natures, Cobbs, Atkinson and Lay, the latter (who had lately received his doctorate, like the first, from Hobart College) was destined to compose a touching and beautiful memoir of the first and to deliver a nobly appreciative memorial sermon upon the second. Of the other new bishops there was one whose acquaintance we have already made—Alexander Gregg.

Thirteen years had passed since Gregg's ordination to the diaconate by Bishop Gadsden,—thirteen years of pastoral labor in his native place in the course of which those sterling qualities of his nature were exercised and exhibited that were to fit him for higher responsibilities in an illimitably vaster sphere. He possessed moral qualities of a high order, steadfastness of purpose and untiring energy, and beside, a kindliness of heart, humility of mind and spirituality that remind one forcibly of Bishop Cobbs. He walked in a perpetual consciousness of the enveloping presence of the world of spirits. He was a churchman of the type of Dehon, Gadsden and Rutledge. He was an ideal pastor; sickness, want, bereavement, troubles of every kind, found unfailing response in his sympathy, counsel and assistance, as we are told by one who knew him well in those early days, without respect of class or religious connection; and 'he made the poor feel that there was a place for them in the house of God.' As a citizen he kept constantly in view the true interests of the community, and led in all benevolent enterprise, and in the uplifting of its mental and moral life. He was loyal to high ideals; we have marked the chastened fervor of his style in describing the inauguration of the University of the South; in after

years he declared that language failed him fully to express the enthusiasm inspired in his breast at the inception of the university, and his hopes when its foundations were laid. During his pastorate he was more than once called to other fields—notably by his friend Bishop Green to a highly eligible position at Natchez—but he hearkened to none till finally there came a constraining call to the bishopric of Texas, vacant through the death of Bishop Freeman. He now received the doctorate from his alma mater, and was consecrated in the Monumental Church at Richmond during the session of the convention. Otey, Polk, Elliott, Green, Davis and Atkinson—almost all the southern bishops and episcopal trustees of the university—assisted in the laying on of hands: it is to be regretted that Cobbs and Rutledge were not of the number. As soon thereafter as he was able he made a visit of investigation to his huge diocese that occupied him for one wonderful month. He went by boat from New Orleans to Galveston, and thence proceeded to Houston, Austin and San Antonio, everywhere confirming, and in the latter place laying the corner-stone of a church. Next he visited Seguin and Gonzales, where he spent Christmas, holding service in a Baptist meeting-house, and the day after left for Columbus, ‘seats in an ambulance having been provided.’ He then returned by way of Richmond and Houston to Galveston, and so homeward in the new year of 1860, greatly gratified by the ‘cordial welcome’ he had everywhere received and by the ‘earnest attention’ of the congregations gathered to hear him in court-houses, school-houses, Masonic halls and Presbyterian, Methodist and other meeting-houses very ‘kindly offered.’ A month later, he removed with his family to Galveston, and in the course of three visitations

during his first year confirmed a hundred and thirty persons—in addition to a hundred on his preliminary visit,—consecrated three churches, and travelled, by every imaginable conveyance, much over three thousand miles. At the outset he issued an invitation (that resulted in large correspondence) through the principal journals of the state to every member of the church therein to send him his name and address; and year by year he persisted until at length he had visited every place whence an answer to that invitation had come.

Cobbs availed himself of his journey to Richmond to pay a visit to his old friends at Petersburg: 'It was a great comfort to me,' he declared, 'to mingle again with my former parishioners, and to find that they had the same kind and loving hearts as when I resided amongst them.' And now, before we bid him farewell in time, let us confirm our acquaintance by some of those familiar touches that are the woof of human life, and seek to complete our mental picture of him, weaving together (without too much repetition) sentiments, opinions, traits and tastes until we see him in his daily walk.

In religion he was evangelical to the end. Lay tells us that he positively loved the doctrine of 'justification by the sole merits of Christ,' and that in one of his last letters he wrote, 'Throw out the true evangelical flag of the church.' He loved the hymn, 'Rock of Ages,' and was wont to say that two lines in it expressed the sum and substance of his religion:

In my hand no price I bring,  
Simply to Thy cross I cling.

The Montanistic alloy in his religion, however, was never completely eliminated. Of course we must bear in mind

the character of the times as it has been already depicted, —but nothing can justify an indiscriminating reprobation of pleasures in their nature innocent. That is, in fact, the short, sure and easy method of thrusting active souls into guilty pleasures. There are of course good and bad dances and dancing-masters, good and bad plays and actors,—but Bishop Cobbs condemned them all without distinction. He would rather see a rattlesnake on his table, so he often declared, than a pack of cards. He could not distinguish between a classic game like whist—between card-playing—and gambling. There is something pathetic, something a little too tremulous in that attitude; vulgar gambling was no doubt a vice universally prevalent, and sickening to a soul like his,—but yet it savors of superstition to believe that some baleful sorcery inheres in bits of figured cardboard. He declared that he would never confirm a dancing-master, and that when in company he had never stayed to witness a couple waltz. ‘They will dance the church to death,’ he said mournfully of some of his people, and he was poignantly distressed when a vestryman of St. John’s Church built a theatre in Montgomery. He made no allusion to these matters, however, in the pulpit.

Dancing and acting are akin to fine arts, and herein one little touch betrays the worthy bishop’s whole attitude: he would not go to see Powers’ Greek Slave—for it was in the nude. Though opposed to church embroidery and the sequence of ecclesiastical colors, he yet had an eye for color, red being his favorite. Hence he loved roses, and noted with peculiar pleasure the exquisite pink of the crape myrtle. So marked was his preference that his friends used to rally him upon it, maintaining that it betrayed his British sympathies, and that he would have been with the redcoats

(though that he would never admit) in 1776. Except the above, he did not often notice flowers or, singularly enough, the tints of the sunset heavens unless his attention was called to them. He had an eye like any sensible man for female beauty and for ladies' dress, and here his taste was for simple elegance: he would have been scandalized by Parisian evening costume had he ever beheld it—but he never attended fashionable evening parties. Much jewelry and especially the cross as an ornament were deeply distasteful to him. He had little ear for music, and never tried to sing save when delirious, as in attacks of malarial fever: then only he would try to strike up a hymn,—and in this respect also it were to be wished that many would follow the good bishop's example.

His literary tastes were contracted by his Montanistic strain. He did not care for Shakespeare. This was inevitable, for Shakespeare was a playwright and the supreme poet of the world and of nature, often sadly unsanctified. The great poet was at a discount in Alabama in those days; for some unexplained reason Alexander Meek did not admire him. The bishop liked George Herbert's and Cowper's poetry, and named his sons for Hooker and Leighton. He was fond of languages. Bishop Atkinson testified to his ill-recognized mental ability: Cobbs' mind, he declared, was the most original and suggestive that he had ever encountered, and from none had he derived more new thoughts, but, he added, 'his powers of mind were not duly estimated because of his modest and retiring character.' So amiable and trustful was he, so reluctant to impute wrong motives, that few could suspect at first sight what a keen judge and reader of character he was. It is true; the eye of the mind is cleared by piety so that it beholds

persons and objects in their proper light, piercing the veils of pretence, false sentiment and flattery: the good are not without a guard in this present world. The bishop's clear-sightedness was only dimmed by his sympathies; these were so tender that he was often imposed on. After many years he felt compunction at the thought of an impatient answer he had once made to a stranger who had inquired the way at some cross-roads. Sympathy was the key-note of his character and the source of his influence; it summed up for him the Saviour's life and work, and he thought that his ministers should always exhibit it. 'Preach what you can throw your feelings into,' he always answered when any of his clergy asked him what to preach. His style was accordant with this advice; he was fond of stringing adjectives together—'devoted and faithful and useful and eminent men'—and of emphasizing favorite words like 'Christian' or 'church,' repeating them half a dozen times in as many clauses.

Let us follow him across the threshold of his home. 'I dare not intrude,' wrote Elliott, 'into the sacred sanctuary of his home. Private loves and private griefs belong not to the public eye.' In a sermon (as on that occasion), in such a place and at such a time, that was a correct sentiment. There is a reserve, certainly, that should not be violated, and generally it may be inexpedient to reveal a man's domestic life: only too often it will not bear exposure; but to ignore it in the present case and circumstances would be not only inexpedient but wrong,—at this date there remains absolutely no reason for reticence. It has been well said that although the public is 'not entitled to know everything about distinguished men, it has its rights in the matter, and among these is the right to know how



nearly any man's private life has harmonized with his public professions,'—in a word, whether inner in his case corresponded to outer, the kernel to the covering; and whether we will or no, that is going to be the imperative demand in the future, and without such knowledge none will rest content. 'The man who receives the suffrages of his fellow-men becomes in no small degree responsible to them. He professes to lead and instruct them, and for that reason they are entitled to know such of the facts of his private life as will enable them thoroughly to understand his character. "His worst he kept," says Tennyson. If he kept this worst entirely to himself, all honor to his noble self-control. If he kept it to wreak upon the private circle of those who knew him best and loved him most, then it is right that the fact be made known.' In the home life of Nicholas Hamner Cobbs there is nothing to make known save a course of consistent kindness. Unlike many men of genial but impulsive natures, who yield to occasional violent antipathies and gusts of temper, with him sympathy was not an impulse but a principle. Therein, we take it, is pure moral perfection: true sympathy as a principle. It is a satisfaction to behold a character in which exterior and interior, show and substance, so perfectly corresponded, —a pleasure to lift the veil upon a home so peaceful, happy, pure and fair.

How far that little candle throws its beams!  
So shines a true home in a sinful world.

Not to speak of the bishop's domestic life would be to leave out of the picture his most characteristic feature. He was intensely domestic. When off on a visitation he let not a day pass without writing to his wife, if it were

only a line. We recall that failure of communication with his family brought him back from England in a hurry. Mrs. Cobbs was a person of strong character, and her object in life was to make home pleasant and free of care to her husband. A single fact forcibly illustrates both points; she once suffered the excision of a painful tumor without taking anæsthetics and, because she knew the fruitless distress that knowledge of it would cause him, without giving him an inkling as to the operation until it was over. They were a most united and unselfish pair; their relations were never ruffled. The one point on which they agreed to differ was the subject of marriage, especially second marriages, of which she disapproved. The bishop did not believe in the celibacy of the clergy, and when told that two of his had announced their intention of remaining celibates he replied, 'Give them time and they will come to their senses!' (One of them, however, never came to his.) He believed that every one should marry; Mrs. Cobbs on the contrary used to say that she had the highest admiration for a Christian old maid. When he told her once, in answer to a question, to whom he was writing, she exclaimed, 'Now, Bishop, the last time you wrote to the Judge it was to condole with him on the loss of his wife, and now you are writing to congratulate him on getting married!' The bishop could only laugh, for it was too true.

He was wholly above the parental, more commonly, to be sure, maternal weakness of wishing to be loved best by his children; he used to tell them that he would have them love their mother more than they did him. She undertook their discipline; he disliked exceedingly to inflict punishment, and in fact scarcely ever did so. He once came

into the house looking very much dejected, and when asked what was the matter, replied that he had had to give one of the children 'a severe whipping.' One of them coming in soon after said, 'Oh, mother, you ought to have seen the *twig* he used: it couldn't have hurt a fly!' As his daughters grew up, he treated them with deferential courtesy.

Mrs. Cobbs took also the oversight and discipline of the slaves, of whom there were six or so about the house—a father and son and several women. These were an inheritance of the bishop's, and had followed him, as we have seen, of their own free will to Cincinnati, and thence to Alabama. They stood in awe of Mrs. Cobbs but were not in the least afraid of him, so indulgent was he. The elder man, who was too fond of liquor, used to get the young people of the house to intercede for him with their mother,—for as for their father the bishop, he said, he could always manage him.

Bishop Cobbs believed in and practised self-help. He was entirely above all vulgar contempt for manual labor. He never liked to cause trouble or to be waited on when he could serve himself. In this his friend Atkinson resembled him, who, we are told, in sickness as in health, even in suffering and helplessness, would if possible help himself and try to lessen others' pains. Bishop Meade tells us that when on a visit to Bishop Griswold,—that true servant of God,—having as a matter of course put his shoes without his bed-room door to be blacked, looking for them in the morning he discovered his host cleaning them with his own hands. Nor was that the only occasion when the holy Griswold exercised such humility; being remonstrated with he replied that that was the only way we had now of

washing the disciples' feet. Cobbs referred to the incident and the sentiment with admiration, and certainly thought nothing of blacking his own shoes upon occasion. St. Clement of Alexandria says that the Christian may properly do anything for himself and may without derogation perform any loving, reciprocal service for another. The bishop was simple and exceedingly neat in his habits and attire. We have observed his distaste for jewelry: he himself never wore even a ring. We have followed him into his dressing-room—and why not? Since Bishop White's biographer tells us that he buttered his mince-pies, it would appear that no fact can be too inconsequential to mention. One of Cobbs' favorite precepts, to inculcate habits of neatness in his children and to save others and even a slave unnecessary trouble, was, Always empty the basin after washing! He always shaved himself and cut his own hair—thus effectually precluding the unmentionable contagion of barber-shops and their implements of promiscuous use. So he kept a head of hair, latterly growing thin and gray but still without baldness, to the end. He rose at six in the morning, and opened the day with family prayer, reading a psalm or a chapter of the Bible, which he followed with a few collects and part, not usually all, of the order of Family Prayer. Breakfast was at seven, dinner at one o'clock. He never had wine upon his table, but would not refuse a little of it at another's. He was fond of sweets, but was in fact by no means fastidious in the matter of food—as it was well that one in his situation were not. He was fully endued with the episcopal grace of hospitality; generous to a fault, no vice was more repugnant to his nature than meanness and penuriousness. Yet he possessed business ability and insight to an unusual

degree. It is truly remarkable how perfectly he realized the pattern of an apostolic bishop as outlined by St. Paul. He never gave a 'party' save at the marriage of a daughter, but kept open house, entertaining a constant succession of guests and visitors at meals. He delighted in society, in the pleasures of conversation; he had a pleasant voice, a store of anecdote, but was not given to monologue, and never interrupted others save for good cause, and then with profuse apologies. He never enjoyed to repeat anything to another's discredit, and sometimes would gently interpose restraint upon his wife's talk and that of a neighbor who kept them posted upon the progress of society,—a lady whose company the bishop greatly enjoyed, for she talked uncommonly well and he had a keen sense of humor,—but not rarely he would have to check her, laughingly but effectually, in her caustic career.

After an early tea, the family knelt in prayer around the supper-table, and the latest went to their nightly rest as early as nine o'clock: every Christian, the bishop used to say, ought to be in bed by that time. So he continued throughout his episcopal course the simple habits of his pastorate and earliest years.

A lady assured the writer of these lines that he never smoked. It is true that she never saw him do so, as no lady outside his family probably ever did see him smoke; his daily consumption of tobacco was limited to a single cigar, in his study, just before retiring.

In that home Sunday was observed strictly but not sanctimoniously. Attendance upon both morning and evening prayer was a matter of course, and at other hours the family rested, read religious books or papers,—notably the 'Southern Churchman'—and the bishop did not object to

a pleasure walk, though he did seriously to driving on that day or to paying merely social calls; he approved of visiting the sick or the poor.

He was not addicted to a surfeit of daily newspapers,—and that suggests an indication of his attitude toward a little-discussed but profoundly and vitally important problem. He could no more be satisfied with the existing divorce of religion and politics than with that of the former and education. Early in his episcopate he put his conviction on record: 'I think it of vast importance that God should be recognized formally and officially by the nation at large.' He admired, with reservations, the English constitution, and could not think that disunion of church and state was either in theory or practice a more admirable thing than their union, and he looked for a time when a well-considered and salutary harmony—something better, healthier and stabler than their present scrupulous and jealous separation—a species of armed neutrality—should characterize their relations in this country.

His was a tropical nature. He luxuriated in the heat of summer, remarking that his idea of the height of felicity was to lie like a lizard on a log in a July sun. He was never heard to complain of the heat: would that his example were of universal currency!—but he did complain emphatically of cold, and even in weather comparatively mild believed that it was wholesome to have a fire in one's room. We are reminded of his objection to the Cumberland plateau as a site for the University of the South.

He coincided absolutely with Polk in his estimate of the value of refined feminine influence, purifying, sweetening and humanizing, upon young men. He would have it a regulation at Sewanee that no student should sit at a table

at the head of which there was not a lady to pour out the coffee! 'I like to travel with ladies,' he often said, 'they are such a protection to a man.' There was pathos in that remark: it cast a melancholy light upon the profanity and coarseness that assaulted his ears and sickened his sense as he travelled about upon his duties.

Those travels and labors resulted, with God's grace, in doubling the number of diocesan clergy, more than doubling that of parishes, and quadrupling that of communicants in an episcopate of fifteen years; at the convention of 1860, thirty-two clergy were reported, thirty-eight parishes, one thousand, six hundred and fifty white and two hundred and fourteen colored communicants.

The second week in October the bishop spent at Sewanee, assisting 'in the ceremony at the laying of the cornerstone.' It was an impressive occasion. All the bishops interested were present except Davis and the newly-consecrated bishops of Texas and Arkansas, who were presumably detained by diocesan duties. Bishop Smith of Kentucky was there, a welcome visitor. Otey opened the exercises with the hundredth psalm, and after Rutledge had read a few sentences of Scripture, Atkinson called to prayer, and Cobbs put up some appropriate petitions. Then when Elliott had described the books and documents deposited in it, Polk, the founder, laid the corner-stone, explaining that it signified 'strength and stability, the union of the intellectual and spiritual natures of man,' and was an emblem of Christ, the wisdom and the power of God. The orator of the day then well expressed the literary and religious enthusiasm that characterized the inception of the undertaking. Green followed with prayer, and Otey closed the ceremony with the benediction.

At the banquet that ensued, Matthew Fontaine Maury spoke of the harmony of science and religion, Dr. Barnard—who had recently exchanged his professorship at Tuscaloosa for the presidency of the University of Mississippi—put in a plea for pedagogic science, and Bishop Smith pointed out the picturesque contrast between the time, so recent, when the wild Indian roamed over that spot, and the existing occasion, which had filled what was shortly before a solitude with a multitude of people who represented the highest civilization of the hour. He spoke well of church and education, of the ‘diffusion of knowledge sanctified by religion,’ and concluded with a patriotic sentiment: his last word was of union. And so closed the first chapter of the history of the University of the South,—a project in which the claims of religion and education were never more happily combined, as against a rigid separation or alternate depression,—combined in no spirit of narrow ecclesiasticism but in a large and statesmanlike manner, according to the only finally feasible plan, by which religion itself becomes the paramount exercise of the mind and its records the chief subject-matter of study. And to this hour not only southern churchmen but the whole southern people are on trial as to whether they will let that golden ideal, the most beneficent, doubtless, that was ever offered them, decline and vanish from their horizon.

It was about the last public function in which Bishop Cobbs participated. The presidential election of the ensuing dark November made him sick at heart and no doubt shortened his days; he divined the dissolution of the Union and was ready to die. In that election, amid confused and jarring cries and the loud ‘Hush, hush!’ of those who would ignore the consuming question, a plain and simple



issue was drawn,—that of the extension or limitation of slavery. For American slavery had attained its period. It had blazed over an immense amount of territory and so prepared it for rapid settlement, but the term of its use and beneficence, industrial, social or other, to the dominant and subject races was at hand. The political balance had turned; the free states Iowa, Wisconsin, California, Minnesota and Oregon had entered the Union one after the other and others were ready for admission while no new slave states could be prepared. The era of filibustering was over, and the likelihood of an extension of territory southward was remote. Yet at that juncture, strange to say, instead of letting the institution die a slow and natural death, desperate efforts were made to perpetuate it. It is as though it were in the designs of Providence that it should die suddenly and violently. Despite the disapproval of the better southern sentiment, the slave-trade was surreptitiously revived and rapidly increased: it is stated that in a brief period just before the war over sixty cargoes of negroes were successfully landed. Meantime splenetic criticism and John Brown's seizure of the arsenal at Harper's Ferry stirred up indignation and alarm throughout Virginia and the other slave states, and the appearance of a startling book, Hinton Helper's 'Impending Crisis in the South,' seemed to portend a mutinous spirit amid the long quiescent middle class. It was felt that then or never was the time to strike.

Bishop Cobbs loved the Union fondly. He loved the flag, and believed in claiming it and fighting under it if necessary, but he deprecated, with all the force of his gentle spirit, the thought of bloodshed. Herein he was absolutely at one with his fellow Virginian, Otey; they may be

said to have co-ordinated state and country in this order ; the Carolinians on the other hand, Polk and Elliott, were more decidedly and consistently men of their section, and subordinated country to state. Polk hoped for peaceable secession : Cobbs had truer insight, and saw that that was impossible,—for, he pointed out, there was no natural boundary. Perhaps he took a leaf from the early history of his own Alabama, and applied its lesson on a grand scale to the Mississippi river, perceiving that the flourishing commonwealths, rapidly increasing in number in the upper part of its valley, would never be at rest as long as its mouth was under the control of a foreign and generally hostile power.

In December he took finally to his bed. His complaint was jaundice. Knowing what its effect upon his spirits would be, the family agreed to keep from him news of the secession of South Carolina on the twentieth of the month, and it is believed that he never heard or knew of it. On the twenty-ninth a circular was issued, recommending omission from public worship of the prayer for Congress and of the clause for the President of the United States in that for the civil authority, in the event of the secession of Alabama ; the entry was made in his journal in a strange hand.

From his death-bed he dictated a farewell message, his testament to his clergy :

‘ First of all, give to each and every one of them, individually, my love and my blessing ; and tell them that as during my whole episcopate it has been my earnest purpose and constant endeavor to be and to show myself to be the personal friend and helper of every clergyman in my diocese, so now I have them all still in my heart.

'As to my religious belief: tell them that by God's grace I shall die in the faith in which I have lived and which I have endeavored to preach.

'Tell them I dislike party names and loathe party lines in the church of Christ: but NEXT TO CHRIST, WHO IS THE HEAD, I LOVE THE CHURCH, WHICH IS HIS BODY, WITH MY WHOLE HEART.

'I look only unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, and say—

“In my hand no price I bring,  
Simply to Thy cross I cling.”

'And with my farewell blessing upon them, upon their families, upon their parishes, and upon my whole diocese, tell them that their dying bishop exhorts them to strive to be MEN OF GOD,—men of peace, men of brotherly-kindness, men of charity; self-denying men, men of purity, men of prayer; men striving to perfect holiness in the fear of God, and laboring and preaching with an eye single to his glory and the salvation of souls.'

Presbyterian and Methodist ministers and a Roman priest were at his death-bedside. Among his last distinguishable words were the lines from the hymn above. He had prayed that he might not live to see the dissolution of the Union, and he died on the eleventh of January, 1861, a very few minutes before the meridian gun boomed out the news of the passage of the ordinance of secession of Alabama.

Bishop Elliott conducted the funeral service at St. John's Church, Montgomery. Many clergy attended,—and it was remarked as a singularity by many that the deacons (according to ancient use) wore their stoles over the left shoulder only. Elliott's sermon, and particularly the above-

quoted parting message, read by him at the close, 'opened the sluices of sorrow.' A sympathetic rain fell fast as the body was borne to the grave, yet a multitude followed it thither from the city.

So died 'the wisest and best man, the most earnest preacher, the gentlest pastor, the meekest prelate, the soundest churchman of these latter days. Alas for us!' cried Lay, 'that so much wisdom and goodness are withdrawn from our midst! Great is the responsibility of us who have walked with him by the way. In his own distresses and in ours we have seen his face as it were the face of an angel,' and, he added, 'we are still near to him in the communion of saints.'

Certainly if the definition of holiness holds good, that it does not consist in doing extraordinary things, but in doing customary things extraordinarily well, Nicholas Hamner Cobbs was a saint beyond the possibility of demur. 'All his life through,' said Elliott, 'he was kept unspotted from the world.' As of the sainted Griswold, it was said that 'it was difficult to tell in him where nature ended and where grace began.' His was the heavenly, Johannine frame that drew out the best in all he met,—and such shall possess the kingdom.

'In his character,' said Atkinson, 'wisdom and goodness were more remarkably combined than in any man I ever knew.' 'I know not which one of the beatitudes he did not have a share in,' writes his successor in the bishopric of Alabama: 'he was pure in heart, a peacemaker, and hungered and thirsted after righteousness,—and was the meekest man I ever knew.' And Green said, 'I was unworthy to tie his shoe's latchet here, and my highest hope is that I may sit at his feet hereafter.'

Would that a portion of his spirit might rest forever on  
the institutions that he loved!

Were a star quenched on high,  
For ages would its light,  
Still travelling downward through the sky,  
Beam on our mortal sight.

So when a good man dies,  
For years beyond our ken,  
The light he leaves behind him lies  
Upon the paths of men.

And they that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the  
firmament, and they that turn many to righteousness as the  
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